I contracted hepatitis C recently. My doctor wants to wait before treating it. Does this sound right?

February 26, 2019 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Yes, assuming by 'recently,' you mean in the last 6 months. Some peoples' immune systems are able to clear hepatitis C virus (HCV) without medication. We call this spontaneous clearance of hep C. Spontaneous clearance usually occurs within 6 months after contracting the virus. Approximately 15 to 25 percent of people who contract HCV will clear the virus spontaneously. That number jumps to 40 percent for women under age 40.

Many medical providers wait for 6 months before recommending hepatitis C treatment, hoping that the infection will spontaneously clear. However, whether you have a spontaneous clearance or are cured through medication, you will continue to test positive for HCV antibodies, probably for the rest of your life. The good news is that you are virus-free, and can't transmit hep C to anyone.

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