Hear Her Roar

Pamela Anderson is cured of hep C.

March 7, 2016 By Tim Murphy

It's not everyone who celebrates being cured of hepatitis C virus (HCV) by posting a sexy nude picture of themselves for all the world to see. Then again, model, actress and activist Pamela Anderson is not your average hep C survivor.

The buxom blonde alum of TV shows such as Home Improvement, Baywatch and V.I.P. has been on the cover of Playboy 14 times, most recently in December 2015 for the magazine's last nude issue. She seems to get sexier with age, so perhaps it wasn't so surprising last November when Anderson posted on Instagram a joyous pic of herself in her birthday suit on a boat (private parts artfully covered).

"I am CURED!!!" she wrote. "I just found out #nomorehepc #thankyou #blessing #family #prayer #live I pray anyone living with Hep C can qualify or afford treatment. It will be more available soon. I know treatment is hard to get still…#dontlosehope #itworkedforme #thereisacure…"

For the Canadian-born Anderson, it was a happy ending to a saga that began in 2002, when she announced that she was living with HCV, saying she thought she'd likely gotten it from sharing a tattoo needle with her ex-husband, rock musician Tommy Lee. (Lee has never confirmed her version of events.)

After she disclosed, Anderson kept on talking about life with the virus, writing for Jane magazine and telling Howard Stern on his radio show in 2003, at the age of 36, that she didn't expect to live more than another 10 or 15 years.

Hepatitis experts decried the remark, saying it was baseless, and Anderson later said she was joking, but it still reflected the fact that, at that time, hep C treatment was far from optimally effective and often came with brutal side effects, such as exhaustion, nausea and depression.

Nonetheless, Anderson—the first celebrity to publicly disclose her hep C diagnosis—went on to become a spokesperson for the American Liver Foundation. And despite any damage to her liver, she kept on looking great, telling Larry King in 2010 that she was on no treatment, merely a vegetarian diet. (By that time, she'd also become a vocal animal-rights activist.) "I feel good," she told King. "I have a ton of energy…[and I] get yearly checkups."

The emergence in recent years of new hep C drugs with high cure rates and low side effects might have convinced Anderson to finally take the treatment plunge. Last summer, she told People magazine she'd started treatment and that she could be HCV-free within a month. Having hepatitis had "really worked on my self-esteem," she said. "Even though I may have looked confident on the outside…it was really a dark cloud that lingered over me."

According to ABC News, she was successfully treated with Sovaldi (sofosbuvir). Now, she's one of an increasing number of people saying goodbye to hep C after living with it for years. Up next for the actress and activist? She's promoting a line of vegan shoes and a cooking show. Here's hoping she also continues to inspire others to seek treatment for HCV.

Pamela Anderson/Instagram

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