I Will Survive

Terri Milton's experience living with NASH has taught her not to let the disease get the best of her and to enjoy life.

March 2, 2020 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

The word hepatitis generally describes inflammation of the liver. The Ancient Greek word hepa refers to the liver and -itis means inflammation (as in arthritis).

Inflammation of the liver—hepatitis—has several possible causes. Perhaps the most commonly known are viruses, including hepatitis A, B and C viruses. However, other microorganisms can also cause hepatitis.

Other causes include toxins and chemicals, such as excessive amounts of alcohol; autoimmune diseases that cause the immune system to attack healthy tissues in the body; and fatty liver disease.

When fat accumulates, the liver can become inflamed and damaged. Excess use of alcohol can cause the liver to become fatty, a condition known as alcoholic liver disease. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) occurs when the cause of the fatty liver is not alcohol.

Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) is a condition that occurs when fat accumulation has resulted in scarring and other damage to the liver. Cirrhosis may develop, which can lead to liver cancer or liver failure. NASH is no joke.

Terri Milton knows about the hardships of NASH all too well. She has had the condition for 20 years. Despite the challenges, her experience living with NASH has taught her not to let the disease get the best of her and to enjoy life.

"You have to have things to look forward to," Milton says. "Because sometimes the 'right now' sucks!" Regardless of all she has endured with NASH, "I'm smiling," she says, "because this journey has given me an opportunity to meet some of the most amazing people on earth." Click here to read more.

In addition to sharing a personal story of living with NASH, this special issue of Hep focusing on fatty liver disease goes into a lot more detail about the condition.

Although many people are unfamiliar with fatty liver disease, it is estimated that about 20 million

Americans are living with NASH.

As a result, it is important to understand the basics of fatty liver disease, including how the condition progresses and how to manage it.

Currently, there are no approved medications for advanced fatty liver disease. However, a number of treatments for NASH have shown promise in recent mid-stage clinical trials.

In addition, read Care & Treatment stories on NASH treatments, fatty liver weight woes and how fatty liver affects teens and people living with HIV.

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