What to Expect after a Liver Transplant

August 18, 2015 By Karen Hoyt

Karen Hoyt is a blogger who has a story about hepatitis C, cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, liver cancer, and liver transplantation. This excerpt first appeared on Karen's I Help C blog, July 25, 2015.

This is an email to a Best Friend who is waiting on their liver transplant. I thought you might like to read about what to expect after a liver transplant. As always, pardon any errors. I'm 3 months post and still a lil goofy.

Hay Bestie, Get ready for the time of your life. Let me warn you that most of it will be spent resting. Walking is a hoot, but the more you move, the faster you gain strength. Time your walks right after a pain med. There will be less audible groans and you'll be strutting your stuff much smoother.

Ask friends and family to help keep your room peaceful, but upbeat. You need a quiet and positive environment. Our caregivers help create that healing atmosphere. They also help meet our every need at first. I find it hard to ask for anything. My family and friends knew that and kind of hovered around. They were gentle and kind, but forceful when I got all busy.

The mix of meds bring on a type of diabetes. You can expect some sugar highs and lows, but they control it with insulin. You will have your finger pricked a lot! Hopefully, that will even out over the first week. I kept a close watch on it and used ginger chews for nausea instead of ginger ale. Refined sugar is not our friend post transplant or any time.

It may seem snobbish, but I didn't eat hospital food. I stuck with protein bars. I don't know how to eat anything but my liver loving diet. My sis brought me a hold-the-salt steak from Cattleman's in OKC on day 3 with my doctor's permission. It had been years, and I savored every morsel of a bacon wrapped filet, butterflied and cooked to a perfection - medium well done. Other than that, it was all vegetable protein for me.

The first 24 hours were miraculous. I couldn't believe it had gone so smooth! The next thing I knew I was climbing over the rails in my zeal to get moving. Honestly, I felt so AMAZING the moment I opened my eyes. Now I know why athletes love steroids. Wow. I was one happy girl with oodles and gobs of energy. It felt kind of like I was vibrating. You may get the jitters. (I still do) and you won't feel quite like yourself. I am hoping that will continue to ease over time...

To read the rest of Karen's blog, "What to Expect after a Liver Transplant," click here.

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