Best Friend Guide to Hepatitis C

January 2, 2013 By Karen Hoyt

Welcome to Best Friend Guide to Hepatitis C. The moment I learned that my body had been harboring the Hepatitis C Virus, a myriad of questions swelled and yelled in my mind like a crowd of angry protesters. It didn't help that I was in a stage of shock and denial and my brain refused to hear what it couldn't handle. What I needed then, and still need now, was a place to learn what was happening to my body. I desperately searched for medical information, browsed for nutritional advice, and clung to any shred of testimonial that might give me hope to survive. I looked for inspiration, how-to's, and hard cold facts long into the night. The loneliness itself was insurmountable.

I needed a best friend. Ok, let me rephrase that. I had friends, family, sisters, a daughter. They all stood guard like sentries posted in my hospital room and at home, protecting me from my own overwhelmed thoughts. They listened to doctors, and then broke information down repeatedly, to themselves and to me, in an effort to find our new reality. But I needed a best friend who had been there, one who knew about Hep C, it's side effects, treatment, and prognosis. Maybe I even needed a friend who was scared to death, scared of death, and scared enough to make big changes. Yeah, I needed a friend who was fighting for their life.

I found those friends on the internet. Some were on forums where we communicated, and others were personal stories shared once on a website, and then lost in cyberspace. Those friends became everything to me. I considered them a part of what I called my Allied Health Team. In fact, those friends helped me disseminate facts as my doctor tried to explain test after confusing test results to me. I journaled a lot of that information along with nutritional advice, treatment options, relief from side effects, and advice the doctor didn't give me.

I love new ways of looking at and applying information. I get the value of evaluating sources for reliability of content. But don't we all know that occasionally a nudge of advice, humor, or a far fetched idea from a best friend can be the one thing that turns our day around? Suddenly we think outside the norm. With a best friend's help, we can flip over that mental mattress and get a fresh start on what has become an old subject for us. The reality of dealing with a life threatening virus becomes more manageable.

My blog will be based on my understanding with Hepatitis C. I will share my experience with Ribavirin, Interferon and protease inhibitor treatment, also referred to as triple therapy. It will also provide information regarding my ongoing battle with cirrhosis. I'll tell you what best practices worked for me and others like me. I want you to share your best practices too. I hope we'll share how we shop for and cook a liver lovin’ diet that is not boring and bland! I’ll help you find your way to information and advocacy sites. I’ll always need best friends to share the ups and downs of liver disease with. Consider this a welcome to your best friend Guide to Hepatitis C. I’m glad you stopped by and hope you’ll come back soon. Karen :)

P.S. I’m not a doctor. I’m just a hepatitis c survivor. I was on triple therapy for 43 weeks. I still have grade 4 cirrhosis. Please contact a health care specialist regarding any questions you have. My advice is anecdotal and not to be replaced with sound medical advice.
