Can You Get Better With End-Stage Cirrhosis?

Start off by understanding the symptoms and the source of liver damage. Then you can make yourself some promises.

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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.

Many people with liver disease are told that they will not get better. My family and I all wondered if I would make it. Can you get better with end stage cirrhosis? My doctor predicted I wouldn't make it 4 more months. I told the nurse that night, "You don't know me." I had seen my dad dying of a hepatic coma from alcoholism. He made some changes, and made a comeback.

So what does it look like when you're coming back from ESLD or late end-stage cirrhosis? Start off by understanding the symptoms and the source of liver damage. Then you can make yourself some promises.

The Comeback
Stabilize — Your doctor should run lab tests, and then do everything to get your body calmed down. If you are acute, expect a hospital bed. They will stabilize anemia or platelets with a blood transfusion, especially if you've had internal bleeding from varices. You may get a paracentesis to reduce tummy swelling, and start diuretics to keep fluid off. Lactulose helps with brain fog.

Cause — Next, you've got to deal with the source of inflammation. If you have fatty liver, a diet and lifestyle change can help. If you have Hepatitis C, there is a cure. For Hepatitis B, there are medications to calm the liver. If it is chemical, alcohol, medicine, or drug induced, you have to get away from all that.

Promises — Here's where you can make a difference in your own life. Staying within all the guidelines that your medical team offers makes a huge difference. Take all of your medications on time. Start dietary changes by reducing sodium and eating liver-healthy foods. Please keep reading and following the doctor's orders. Promise yourself to do what it takes. You've got to love yourself enough to do this.

Patience — In time, they will assess your stage of liver disease. You may see a gastroenterologist. By staying in compliance, you will be more likely to prove to the doctor that you are going to fight

for your life.

First, the gastro doctor got me stabilized, and eventually referred me to a transplant hospital. I was able to get cured of the hepatitis C and my liver did calm down, but the internal bleeding never really stopped. I had to have bandings repeatedly, and finally got liver cancer. Even THEN, I stayed calm and got a transplant. This all started over 9 years ago. I'm STILL going.

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