Day 73, Go Away Headaches

April 2, 2014 By Joseph Burke

One side effect of this therapy persists, not every day, but shows up randomly to thrust it's ugly face into my life. Headaches have been my most prominent side effect while on Sovaldi and Ribavirin (800mg). My only real strategy to combat their persistence is 2 Alieve and an hour or so of rest. I can definitely conclude that it's the liver medication causing these headaches, as before I rarely got one, and when I did, it was from staring at a computer monitor too long coding web sites or in Photoshop hours upon hours. These headaches are different from normal tension headaches, so much, that I can feel the pulsating behind my eyes. Almost perhaps like a sinus related issue? But my allergies, at best, have been decent the past few weeks, and no real severe moments of scratchy eyes, congestion, coughing or what I refer to as, "river nose." River nose is when you can bend over a sink while shaving, brushing teeth, putting on shoes etc.. and your nose just drips like a leaky faucet. That is "river nose." #RiverNose
I know different people based on health situations, complications and their own personal preference will choose different approaches to their headache woes, but when one is on high-powered toxic liver therapy, sometimes those fallback methods tend to become skewed and greater measures must come into play. That's where I am now, the Alieve works for a while... but then the residual sensations lingers into the evening and night. I have actually had episodes so bad, that I could barely open my eyes even in a dark-lit room from the pulsating throbbing going on inside my head. As the little cartoon above demonstrates, it feels like the top of my head is going to explode.

So here's Joe's 3 step golden rules for Hepatitis C liver treatment related headaches.

1. **Drink plenty of fluids, 64oz a day at least -** One may not realize it, but drinking fluids hydrates your cells, body and membranes, and causes your kidneys to flush out toxins and even your medications. Once the medication is absorbed into your system and cells, the residual has to have somewhere else to go, your digestive tract. Drinking plenty of water not only flushes your system daily of all the medications and toxins, but for me personally, I generally tend to feel better if I've drank plenty of water during the day. Days where I lack or procrastinate, is typically when the headaches and other side effects rear their ugly heads.
2. **Rest & Power Naps Daily** - Your body, especially your liver and immune systems are going through rapid changes while on liver treatment. Your body sometimes has a hard time adjusting and waves of lethargy will strike at any given moment. Taking a 20-30 minute power nap, if it's doable, can reset your body, charge it up and help you finish out the rest of your day. For me the best time to power nap is 1 hour after lunch, that's when you get the after lunch grudge match of alertness and sheer lethargy.
3. **Take Pills to Control effects of Other Pills -** It sounds ironic, and cliche, but let's face it, we have to manage our side effects somehow. Whether your resort of herbal remedies, holistic approaches or you're like me, take two Alieve and call me in the morning type, we all can agree something has got to be done about managing our side effects. Whatever your approach, talk to your liver treatment care specialist and consult on the best approach for you to control your headaches, side effects and make your quality of life better while on liver therapy. And remember, the pain is worth the end result of being potentially rid of your dragons once and for all.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.