Facts about Hep C Alternative Treatments

January 18, 2017 By Connie M. Welch

Every patient needs the facts about Hep C alternative treatments. Herbal treatments and alternative liver medicines need to undergo rigorous scientific study before they can be recommended. “Natural” or dietary treatments and herbal remedies can be quite dangerous and can actually harm your liver and accelerate damage. Always talk to your doctor before you take …

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, “Beware of herbal treatments and other products sold as treatment or cures for Hepatitis C.”

Every patient desires to be rid of the Hep C virus, it’s understandable that patients can turn to less expensive and available remedies that promise to be effective in treating Hep C, but every patient needs to be cautious before taking anything.

Here’s some facts about Herbs and Alternative Methods to treat Hep C:

1. Milk Thistle has been used for liver, bile duct and gallbladder health for years according to the National Institutes of Health. The results of research supported by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) and National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) have shown that silymarin, the active extract of milk thistle and the most popular complementary health product taken by people with liver disease was no more effective than placebo in people with hepatitis C. A placebo controlled study published in JAMA found no positive effects on liver disease in patients with hepatitis C.
2. Colloidal silver is often cited as a treatment for hepatitis C. Some believe that it can reduce symptoms from the virus, but this is inaccurate. There are no studies that currently support this theory. In fact, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Institute of Health warns that colloidal silver is not considered a safe or effective treatment for any disease.

Serious Side effects from Colloidal silver include; the most common is argyria, a bluish-gray discoloration of the skin, which is usually permanent. Colloidal silver can also cause poor absorption of some drugs, such as certain antibiotics and thyroxine (used to treat thyroid deficiency).

The FDA also warned in 1999 that colloidal silver isn’t safe or effective for treating any disease or condition including hepatitis C. The FDA and the Federal Trade Commission have taken action against a number of companies for making misleading claims about colloidal silver products.

3. Vitamin D.A study published in January 2015 in Therapeutics and Clinical Risk Management found that patients who took vitamin D had lower amounts of substances associated with liver injury in their blood. People with hepatitis C may find some value in taking extra vitamin D if they need it, states Dr. Nikroo Hashemi, MD, a hepatologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston but they shouldn't expect it to change the course of their disease. Hashemi also states, It's only good to supplement if you have deficiencies. For the sake of hepatitis C treatment, it will not do anything.

Vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin which if taken in dangerous levels can be harmful. Taking too much vitamin D over a long period of time can cause dangerously high levels of calcium in the blood, according to the National Library of Medicine.

4. Green tea and green tea extract.While Green tea has been noted for health benefits many natural-health websites extol the compounds in green tea as a treatment for various conditions, including hepatitis C.

It's important to note, a polyphenol in green tea known as EGCG is actually a potential inhibitor of the virus, according to research and a review in the British Journal of Pharmacology. But, as with milk thistle, the evidence still isn't strong enough to recommend green tea as an effective hepatitis C therapy and will not eliminate the virus, Dr. Hashemi says. While drinking a daily cup of green tea probably won't do any harm, it also won't have any effect on virus levels in the body, she says.

5. Acupunctureis a form of traditional Chinese medicine. Thin needles are inserted through your skin at specific points which claim to stimulate your healing and well being. It's generally used to treat pain and nausea. There are no published studies regarding the use of acupuncture to treat hepatitis C. It's also important to know that you can transmit hepatitis C to another person through the use of needles.

6. Yoga and meditation.It is important to note that while yoga is beneficial to overall health it will not treat or cure hepatitis C. While mind-body practices can't treat hepatitis C, they can help you stay well while you have the virus, Dr. Hashemi says. Regular meditation, for example, could help you feel less stressed. Certain forms of yoga can also improve your physical fitness, which can reduce your risk of fatty liver disease — a condition that's more common in people with hepatitis C, according to Dr. Hashemi.

7. Flushes, cleanses, detoxes.As with green tea, many websites recommend special "cleansing diets" to rid the liver of toxins and remove hepatitis C virus from the body. But there's no evidence that any of them do any good, Dr. Christopher Moore, MD, a hepatologist and assistant professor in gastroenterology at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago. Some detox methods may be dangerous. "Depending on what's in them, they may actually be harmful to some people," Moore says.

8. Additional Herbs. The Hepatitis Foundation International reports these are some of the plants that are toxic to the liver; plants of the Senecio, Crotalaria and Heliotopium families, plus chaparral, germander, comfrey, mistletoe, skullcap, margosa oil, mate tea, gordolobo yerba tea, pennyroyal, and Jim Blu Huan are all toxic to the liver. (This list is not exclusive).

Important to Consider:

No vitamin or herbal supplements are proven effective in treating hepatitis C, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Talk to your doctor before taking dietary

supplements or herbal remedies. Even natural products can be harmful. It’s important to understand how they may interact with each other or with medications. If you’re considering going off your medication, talk to your doctor first.

A healthy diet and moderate exercise can help your overall health and bring you many health benefits but these will not treat or cure hepatitis C.

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