Going Back to Bed after Liver Transplant Surgery

June 24, 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, June 4, 2015.

After the surgery, my transplant coordinators, friends, and family all conspired to make me rest. Then they got me all jacked up on steroids which made it totally impossible for me to sit still. It was quite a conundrum. In the end, they had to employ some crazy tactics to convince this girl that going back to bed after transplant is a good idea.

The smartest move they made was to call my bed *The Nest*. It is spoken with a sense of comfort and love. Speaking of love, I am a lover of bird's nests. I have them all over the house and in my classroom. I've given them as gifts and take a lot of delight in placing my feather collection in them. They are an amazing blend of grass, twigs, dog hair, feathers, and pieces of paper. One year I found a snake skin woven into it! With no hand or fingers, the birds engineer this tiny and cozy place for their eggs to grow into maturity.

When Julie and Linda first referred to my bed as The Nest, it made me think of the fledgling Blue Jays in our yard at the farm. One spring day a few years back, I was standing under the pecan tree and a little blue ball of fluffy feathers dropped within inches of my feet! As he hopped and flopped around, I took pictures, dodged the flustered and angry parents, and called Joe. He assured me that this was a common occurrence with this species.

It upset me for days. I ran around the yard at night with my infrared flashlight trying to shoo the little guy into the barn so the coyotes, cats, or hawks wouldn't get him. I dashed outside first thing in the morning and combed the pasture til I found him. I had to admire his pluck in thinking he was ready to fly. So bravely he jumped..... but too soon perhaps? He was not equipped to fly yet. The beautiful feathers were of no use to him. He simply was not strong enough. All he could do was hop and flop. And cry. His parents fed him several times a day and I was so glad to see him hungrily eat and gain strength.

Linda and Julie had feathered my nest as painstakingly as the baby Blue Jay's parents had. It started with a mattress pad and really high thread count sheets. Across the head were four or five pillows including my own snuggy one and one from a transplant survivor who makes them for all of the liver transplant patients at Nazih Zuhdi. These are an absolute necessity for stuffing between your legs, behind your back, under your knees and also good to bury your face in when the steroids hit.

To read the rest of Karen's blog "Coming Home after My Liver Transplant," click here.

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