What I’m Thankful For

November 23, 2014 By John Rickman

At this time of year most of us get together with family and friends for food, fellowship and to give thanks for the blessings in our life. This year I have many reasons to be thankful, not the least of which is being cured of hepatitis C. I began this journey eight months ago and was declared cured by my doctor in early October 2014. Was it easy…no it wasn’t. Would I do it again if the protocol I was on hadn’t worked? Without a doubt, the answer is yes. But, I am fortunate because the treatment did work for me the first time, and for that I am thankful. I was thinking about this the other day after my two youngest grandchildren had gone home after spending the day with me. I made a mental list of the things I am grateful for. Here is what I came up with:

1. I am thankful for healthy children and grandchildren and while none of us has a crystal ball, I know now that hepatitis C will not take me from them.
2. I am thankful I sought treatment for my addiction to prescription pain medication and that I am approaching two years clean. It was in rehab that I found out I was infected with the hepatitis C virus.
3. I am thankful for the many friends and family members who supported me while I was in rehab and continued that support while I was in treatment for hepatitis C. There were times I was so tired and anemic I couldn’t do anything. They brought me food and ran errands for me. I will never forget the kindness shown to me at this point in my life.
4. I am thankful for the doctors I had who went to bat for me when my insurance said they wouldn’t pay for any hepatitis C treatment. They wrote letters and put me in contact with support groups that helped me get the hep C treatment medications at no cost.
5. I am thankful for regaining my health. I am stronger and have more endurance than I did before beginning hepatitis C treatment. It took making changes to my diet, exercise, and lifestyle in general but it was worth it and in the end, the changes are really just commonsense approaches to the things I mentioned.
6. I am thankful for finding Hep and for them allowing me to share my story of recovery with them and those reading their blog. It has helped me to stay the course, and I am hopeful that in some small way, it will benefit those considering treatment, those who are in treatment, and those who have finished their hepatitis C treatment.

It can be devastating when you get news from your doctor that you now have a potentially deadly disease within your body. First comes the period of letting it all sink in and then deciding what you are going to do. It’s good to weigh your options and develop a course of action that suits your particular situation. Some have more time to make decisions than others do. However, no matter where anyone is in the progression of this disease, the fact that a cure is available now with a 90+% success rate gives me much to be thankful for.

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