Hep C Treatment Harvoni Experience by Hep C Patient Christine, Part 1

February 15, 2017 By Connie M. Welch

The 8 week regimen of Harvoni helped give this fibrosis patient a new life free from Hep C. Hep C patient Christine shares her hep C treatment experience with Harvoni in her candid interview on Life Beyond Hep C this week.

Connie: Christine, Thank you for sharing your Hep C Treatment Experience with Harvoni this week. Many other Hep C patients and their families will be encouraged by your amazing journey. Let's get started.

Can you share how you found out you had Hep C? I am not asking how you got Hep C, only how you found out, for example was it when you gave blood, or at a doctor's appointment, etc…? What year were you diagnosed with Hep C?

Christine: I had been feeling unwell for a couple of months with a severe headache, and general fatigue. I just knew there was something wrong. After many investigations with no diagnosis I suggested to my doctor that I felt there was something in my blood. It's strange but that's how I felt.

He was lovely and suggested screening for HIV and Hep C. I had no risk factors other than my profession as a nurse. I happily agreed as I did not think for a minute that I could have been carrying either virus.

My doctor was so good to have suggested testing. I'm so very grateful to him and I've told him so.

The shock of the diagnosis came on November 27th 2015 with antibodies present for Hep C. I felt like my life shattered!!

Connie: I'm so sorry you've had to go through this. I know all Hep C Warriors can relate to that feeling of being shattered by the Hep C diagnosis. Did you have any symptoms prior to your diagnosis?

Christine: I felt generally unwell. I was very tired all the time. I had severe headaches to the point I could barely lift my head from the pillow. I had a metallic taste in my mouth and visual disturbance which felt like I had a film over my eyes and numerous floaters in my vision. I seemed to struggle fighting off infections. I had an ear infection for about 3 months, which wore me down. I wasn't sure what symptoms were from menopause and the stress of life and what was from the Hep C virus.

Connie: What genotyope were you diagnosed with?

Christine: I had genotype 1a.

Connie: Did you ever have a liver biopsy? If so, what type (regular needle biopsy, Fibroscan, or MRI?) also what year and what was your diagnosed liver condition?

Christine: I did not have a liver biopsy, but I did get a Fibroscan thanks to this site and the valuable information it offers, I was proactive in requesting one. I knew the importance of a Fibroscan to confirm liver damage, which had not been detected on my ultrasound. The ultrasound had come back normal but I wanted to know if this made a difference to my position in line for treatment and insisted on a Fibroscan!!

Connie: What stage were you diagnosed with prior to starting treatment?

Christine: I had 0-1 Fibrosis.

Connie: If you don't mind sharing this: Did you talk to your family, friends, co- workers, or your employer about your Hep C diagnosis and/or treatment?

Christine: The diagnosis sent me into a pit of despair. I felt afraid and very alone. My closest loved one was unable to comprehend and support me. He went into his own world to escape reality.

My poor Mother was my rock. I told her but did not enlighten her to all it meant due to I didn't want to worry her. I didn't tell my sons initially. I was very emotional over the Christmas period that year. I eventually told them in February after I had educated myself and had come to terms with the diagnosis myself.

I also told a friend within my church family one Sunday morning as I was giving her a lift to church. I needed to cry to someone. She was very compassionate. I also told my pastor and an elder who I was close to. They were both very supportive which made all the difference. I didn't tell my colleagues or my work place after seeking advice from the consultant. The stigma is very apparent and appropriate education is most definitely needed.

Connie: I totally relate to what that was like. I am glad you found those who supported you. That is very important. You're a Mighty Hep C Warrior my friend. We look forward to hearing more about your Harvoni experience.

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