Hep C Treatment Side Effects and Help to Get Through It, Part 1

October 7, 2013 By Connie M. Welch

Hep C Treatment side effects are dealt with emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually and many times financially. Patients as well as Caregivers need to know how to best deal with these before they come up.

There is a good old saying, “With much preparation there is little perspiration.”

Anxiety, anticipation, dread, fear, depression, weariness, can be part of the run off. These side effects are just as real as the physical ones and we have to learn how to get through them. I will be sharing topics on treatment side effect in a part series.

I wanted to outline some issues and helps that I have experienced on my Hepatitis C treatment journey.

Help for Anxiety/Depression Side Effects:

My doctor recommended taking a low dose anti-depressant for the anxiety/depression side effects. The anti-depressant generally takes approximately 3 weeks or longer before it gets into your system to work properly. Sometimes dosage amounts may need to be adjusted or medication changed if this is not the right one for you. Don’t give up if this needs to be adjusted.

If you have periods of feeling blue, depressed, overly anxious, frustrated or angry. Remember to tell yourself, “this is the treatment meds making me feel this way, this is not me.” And remember to tell your loved ones this too.

It is important to understand the treatment meds are so strong they can chemically make you feel depressed and overly anxious. This is not an emotional or mental issue, but a physical one from the treatment meds. I did not use any anti-depressants with my first two treatment’s but I did listen to my doctor’s advice with taking something for my third treatment and it made a big difference. I am so glad I did.

Also, it is very important to have a good support group or someone to talk with you through this time. Encouragement and support makes a huge difference in getting through treatment. A helpful resource meets on our website, Hep C Warriors Friday Forum Support Group that meets each Friday.

Help for Insomnia Side Effects:

- My doctor advised me to take the Ribavirin no later than 4:00pm due to the side effects of insomnia with this med.
- Tip: Take 1-2 Tyelenol PM or other sleep aid med. Also available over the counter is Diphenhydramine HCI 25 mg. This is the same medication without the Acetaminophen.
- Tip: Benedryl before bedtime if problems persist.
- Tip: Warm bath prior to bedtime, helps relax muscles.
- Tip: A glass of milk (normally 1 cup), old remedy but it works, does the trick to help me to get sleepy.
- Tip: Ask your doctor about a prescription sleep aid if problems persist.

Help for Nausea/Vomiting Side Effects:

If you are on triple therapy using one of the new protease inhibitors, it is very important not to miss a dose of your meds. Nausea & Vomiting can interrupt your meds. If you miss a dose be sure to contact your doctor.

- I found that having Phenegan or Zoforan (which are prescriptions) work. I personally had excellent results with using Zoforan, a small tablet that dissolves on your tongue quickly.
- Tums can also offer relief from stomach upset, acid stomach, heartburn.
- Crackers are good to help with nausea. Keeping a little something on your stomach is better than being empty dealing with medicine side effects.

Click here for Part 2 and here for Part 3 of Hepatitis C Treatment Side Effects and How to Get Through Them.

Can you relate to any of these side effects? What helped you? Do you have a question about other side effects?

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