Hep C Triple Therapy Patient Experience from Malc, Part 1

June 19, 2013 By Connie M. Welch

Hep C Triple Therapy Patient Experiences share similar side effects depending on the protease inhibitor that is used. Not all Hep C patients treatment experience is exactly the same.

Hep C Warrior Malc, shares his Hep C treatment experience using the protease inhibitor Incivek (telaprevir) in combination with Peg Interferon and Ribavirin.

I was first diagnosed with Hep C in 2009. I am genotype 1a. Doctors said I have probably had the virus for about 40 years without any symptoms. So the decision to start treatment was difficult. After a lot of prayer, I decided to do treatment. I had first treatment in 2010 with Peginterferon, Ribavirin. It was a 48week course. I was clear of the virus from week 8 through to week 48. Unfortunately, when treatment stopped the virus was detectable.

In February 2013, I began triple therapy with Incivek, (telaprevir). After the third week I experienced mild rash/itch. That cleared fairly quickly. At week 8, I had rash on lower legs. The itch became a real problem. I used a strong topical corticosteroid, prescribed by doctor; “Betnovate” cream, (betamethasone valerate).

This seemed to work quite well in the daytime, but at night the warmth in bed caused the itch to become severe. I found myself scratching while half asleep. My legs became quite sore. Thankfully, when I finished the, Incivek (telapevir) the itching stopped almost at once.

A big problem, which I believe we all suffer is the amount of fat needed with Incivek (telaprevir). Most information advises 20g of fat with each dose. My Hep C specialist said consume as much fat as you can stomach, so I was averaging 60g with each dose. (6am-2pm-10pm).

We all have to discover for ourselves which kind of fats we can cope with. There are healthy fats and not so healthy ones. So I tried my best to combine both. Avocado’s are excellent for high fat. But the best one for me was “Virgin Olive Oil.” I would take 30g before my usual fat intake. (It’s a very healthy fat too!).

The benefits of high fat intake are really important. First, the drug stays in the liver for a long period of time, which helps it to fight the virus much better than when on a low fat intake. Second, very little of the drug passes through the anal passage which prevents the dreaded rectal “burning” which can be very serious. Third, it helps prevent hemorrhoids, which once again can be serious.

Anal hygiene is very important. There are many wet wipes on the market which you can take with you on

your travels. Unperfumed baby wipes are obviously the best; try and get flushable ones. There are many creams available to soothe any discomfort, have a chat with your pharmacist to see what may best suit you. Vaseline (petroleum jelly) is very good for relief.

After the first few weeks my white blood cell count dropped, which caused me to become anemic. Fatigue is my worst enemy. For most of the time I feel absolutely “wiped out.” I take a natural iron supplement: “Floradix.” It helps a little. Other side effects I experience now are: Dry itchy scalp; Betnovate scalp lotion helps. I tried Johnsons no more tears baby shampoo, this didn’t help; but E45 shampoo does relieve the itching.

Insomnia was a problem. But this has been a problem for me for many years. I don’t take sleeping tablets, but there is a very old antidepressant called Trimipramine which is reasonably safe, and is a good sedative; works really well for me.

I have a very sore ulcerated mouth, which makes it difficult to eat. I use a mouthwash called Dif-Flam; very effective. The sore mouth makes it difficult to eat. My doctor suggested bananas and mashed potatoes. Since finishing Incivek (telaprivir), my appetite has gone. I lost 14 pounds in 7 days!

Malc, Thank you for sharing your Hep C treatment experience. We look forward to hearing the rest of your story tomorrow.

Can you relate to Malc’s experience?

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