Hepatitis C Clinical Trials

April 23, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Here is something that I have a hard time wrapping my head around: I have about four more weeks of hepatitis C treatment left. When I was on the 48-week regimen, at this same point I had 40 weeks to go. I feel like I am just getting started.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial. People ask me how to find hepatitis C studies. I suggest you ask your medical provider, others in your community with hepatitis C, and look on the websites of the closest major medical centers in your area.

Here are some links to more information about clinical trials, or to help you locate hepatitis C studies:

- Hep Magazine
- HCV Advocate - Hepatitis C clinical trials are listed by pharmaceutical company
- ClinicalTrials.gov
- CenterWatch

When evaluating whether a clinical trial is right for you here are some questions to ask:

- What is the purpose of the study?
- What is the drug or combination of drugs being tested?
- What is the study phase? If the trial is in an early phase, how many humans have received the study drug?
- What information is known about this drug, from animal and human studies?
- Is a placebo being used? If so, what are the chances of receiving the study drug versus the placebo? If I receive the placebo, will I be offered the study drug at the end of the trial period?
- If this is a double-blind placebo study, when can I expect to know if I received the placebo or the study drug?

- What side effects can I expect from the study drug? Are there any serious risks? If I were harmed as a result of the research, what treatment would I be entitled to receive?
- What are the potential benefits or risks of my participation in the study?
- What other treatment or non-drug options are open to me if I do not participate in the study?
- Will I receive lab tests or other diagnostic tests throughout the study? If so, how often? Will I be told the results during the study or will the results be revealed after the end of the trial?
- What are my responsibilities as a participant?
- How long does the study last? How many visits are required? Are appointments at specific times or is the schedule flexible? Are there any other expectations that will require my time and effort?
- Where is the study being conducted?
- What should I tell my family or coworkers regarding my participation in the trial?
- Will I continue to see my regular physician if I participate in the study?
- Will I incur any costs? Will the treatment or tests be free?
- How many subjects will participate in the study?
- Will I be able to continue taking my regular medications or supplements (including prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, minerals, and herbs)?

Clinical trials are not for everyone, and some studies might not be appropriate for your situation. However, the right trial is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference, whether it is to help others or to help yourself.

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