# Hepatitis C and Joint Pain

February 13, 2019 By Connie M. Welch

Symptoms

A common symptom of hepatitis C is joint and muscle pain. The HCV infection can cause joint and muscle pain due to the infection activates the body's immune system, which works overtime trying to fight the virus. Hepatitis C can cause arthritis (joint inflammation), muscle pain, and weakness, and vascular (blood vessel) problems.

The American College of Rheumatology states, "Rheumatic diseases are problems, including pain in the joints, muscles, and connective tissue (the tissue that supports and binds many other parts of the body). Painful joints and muscles combined with fatigue are usually the first and most common complaints. Less often, joint swelling and inflammation of blood vessels (vasculitis occur)."

Testing

They also recommend anyone newly diagnosed with arthritis or cryoglobulinemia (a condition marked by abnormal proteins in the blood) should be tested for hepatitis C.

Treatment

It's important once the patient is diagnosed with hepatitis C to be referred to a physician who specializes in liver disease such as a hepatologist or gastroenterologist. Patients will need to have additional testing to determine the condition of the liver, viral load, and genotype (virus strain).

There are many new treatments for hepatitis C that are all "interferon-free" and have less side effects than older treatment. Considering which hepatitis C treatment is best suited for each patient is determined by the patients liver condition, viral load, genotype, and overall medical condition.

Medications to treat forms of joint and muscle pain can have toxic effects on the liver and need to be used with caution due to these can cause further damage to the liver.

It is best for liver specialist's and rheumatologists to work together to come up with a treatment plan for both hepatitis C and arthritic conditions.

There are many new treatments and medications effective for both hepatitis C and arthritic conditions. Remedies such as warm baths, heating pads, massage, and stretching exercises can also help relieve joint and muscle pain along with over the counter anti-inflammatory medications. Make sure to consult with your physician prior to taking any medication, or supplements.

Once patients have been treated successfully for hepatitis C, many of the joint and muscle pain symptoms can often subside.

Being proactive with testing and treatment for hepatitis C is the best step a patient can take toward resolving hepatitis C and joint/muscle pain.

Have you experienced joint and muscle pain with hepatitis C?

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