# Hepatitis C, The Liver, Hormones, and Recovery

Be patient and be kind to yourself but also push yourself when you need to push.

August 20, 2020 By Greg Jefferys

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The liver has many important functions in the body, but one that is not talked about much is the liver's role in regulating hormones. This role is important because when we suffer liver damage from Hep C the liver does not regulate hormones properly. This side effect of having Hepatitis C has many consequences, including emotional instability that can lead to depression or anxiety.

Hep C induced hormonal imbalances can also lead to things like hair loss, breast enlargement in men, and unexpected weight gain, just to mention just a few things.

Every day I get emails from people who are having health issues at various stages of having chronic Hepatitis C. Sometimes they are moving toward starting their Hep C treatment, sometimes they are in the middle of their Hep C treatment, and often they are months past the end of their Hep C treatment.

Today I had a few people write to me who were concerned about side effects from Hepatitis C that were persisting months after the completion of their successful Hep C treatment. They were wondering why they were still having these Hep C health issues even though the Hep C virus was long gone.

Today the main subjects discussed were:

1. Skin rashes and itchy skin.
2. Weight gain

I have dealt with skin rashes and itchiness in some detail in other posts so today I would like to share the correspondence I had related to excess, unexplained weight gain during and after Hepatitis C.

## Hepatitis C and Weight Gain

Hi Greg,

I have a question regarding Hep C.

I completed the Harvoni treatment 7 weeks ago. All my adult life I was always around 130 pounds but once the Hep C really made me sick I gained 50 pounds.

Weird because I was not eating much.

Now that the treatment is done, I still don't eat a lot and am walking 5 days a week but the weight is not coming off. Any information I would really appreciate. No weight issues in the family, all in good shape.

Thanks ####

3:58 PM

Greg:

Hi ######

Many of these types of issues are related to the role of the liver in hormone regulation… particularly for women.

The liver regulates sex hormones, thyroid hormones, cortisone, and other adrenal hormones.

When the liver is damaged from Hepatitis C it cannot perform these functions properly and this causes hormonal imbalances.

The liver makes some hormones and also maintains hormone balances made by other organs of the body, so it acts as a processor, regulating and directing hormones to carry out their functions in the body.

The liver also removes  and eliminates excess hormones

In the case of excessive weight gains, the liver is responsible for both testosterone and oestrogen hormones, either of these may induce weight gains if out of balance.

If your body experiences a hormone excess or imbalance after the liver has been damaged by Hepatitis C then the liver will not be able to process hormones efficiently and this will cause continual hormonal imbalance.

In your case, it is likely that your weight issues are the result some type of hormonal imbalance as a result of the liver damage caused by the Hep C. To overcome this problem you may find that you have to push yourself somewhat to "reset" your body and stimulate your liver's healing processes.

Of course, things will improve over time as the liver heals and functions more and more as it should, which may take a couple of years

But to really make improvements I found I had to push through certain barriers

I did this by developing a pretty serious exercise program and also some changes to diet and lifestyle

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Oh gosh, that is what I read and hoping maybe I would get better sooner. With all your experiences I thought you would be a good source.

Greg

You only finished treatment seven weeks ago, seven weeks since the end of treatment is not much time if you've had Hep C for a number of years.

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I have changed my diet, and that helped. I am finally able to start the walking for now.

Any recommendations on what I should do?

So it primarily I guess how the liver is controlling things.

Any natural things I should take? Like for liver etc.

Greg

Well a good healthy diet, plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and not too much red meat. Regular outdoor exercise That's the basic thing.

But if it helps, let me share with you what I do… it may be of use to you

I start every day with a glass of water when I wake up and then either the juice of a fresh lemon squeezed into a glass of water or with a glass of fresh-squeezed orange juice. This cleanses the digestive system; the liver is intrinsically linked to the digestion. It's also a blood cleanser.

By "fresh" I mean I squeeze the juice myself.

Then I go for a walk for about 20 to 30 minutes.

Walking stimulates the circulation, its gets the blood moving and massages our internal organs.

After my walk I have a healthy breakfast. For me that's muesli and a banana and then I have a black coffee. But there are lots of options for "a healthy breakfast", choose the "healthy breakfast" that sits best with you. Avoid sugar and processed foods. Look for unprocessed, whole foods.

For my other meals I just have a sensible healthy diet.

## Exercise is Important For Hep c Recovery

But the important thing for me is that I try to finish each day with a serious cardiovascular and muscle building workout for about 20 minutes. This is a workout that has  a focus on building some muscle tissue

The focus on building muscle tissue is not so that I get a 6 pack or great pecs but because there is a LOT of recent research showing that all our organs are stimulated by the process of building new muscle. Basically, the muscle-building process sends signals out to the organs (especially the liver) to build new tissue and as a result they undergo some regeneration. This information had a

profound effect on me and my health and was a real turning point in my recovery from hepatitis C and liver damage.

But do remember that healing is not a linear process… you will have periods that are tough and periods where you move forward in big bounds. It will take about 2 years for you to completely recover

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Okay, this confirms what I need to do. Also, to be patient with the healing process and it is okay if it takes some time. Thank you very much Greg for your help.

Greg

Yes, be patient and be kind to yourself but also push yourself when you need to push.

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