Hepatitis C and New Year Resolutions

January 2, 2017 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

"Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned." ~Peter Marshall

The healthier you are, the easier it is to live with chronic illness such as hepatitis C or other liver disease. We all know that we are supposed to exercise, eat better, and maintain a normal weight, but doing these things are easier said than done. From Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, things can get out of control, and before you know it, you are feeling lousy. This is when many of us say, "I'll get back on track January 1st. No, wait, let's make that the 2nd. But I have plans for Martin Luther King weekend, so I'll get back on track after that. Better make that after Valentine's Day…"

In the meantime, your liver is not happy. The liver doesn't like the extra demand that sugar, fat, and junk food place on it. Hepatitis C is replicating a trillion times a day, and your liver is working on overtime already, so those holiday treats are now holiday threats.

There is no time like the present to take charge of living with hepatitis C and soothing your holiday-ravaged liver. Since it is January, then consider making a New Year's resolution. Nearly half of all adults make resolutions. People have been making annual resolutions since the Romans. While I am not sure what Romans were resolving (no drinking while driving chariots), I do know that most New Year resolutions are health-related.

If you think that resolutions fail, think again. According to John Norcross, author of Changeology, 40 to 44 percent of New Year resolutions are successful after six months. People who make resolutions are 10 times more likely to change than those who don't make resolutions. So, although more resolutions fail in the first six months than succeed, the commitment process has a decent track record.

You may be thinking, "Does this person know ANYTHING about hepatitis C? I can barely get my laundry done, let alone exercise. Even thinking about physical activity makes me tired." Believe me I understand. I am not suggesting that you run a marathon; I am suggesting that you make small, achievable changes. Small change is better than no change.

Maybe you don't want to exercise, but perhaps you are willing to add just a little more activity in to your life, such as walking in place every time there is a commercial on TV. If hepatitis C is holding you back from exercise, how about focusing on your diet? What about committing to a sugar-free Mediterranean diet for one or more days a week? Or learning about food labels, reading them, and making more careful choices about what you buy? Or resolving to go to bed earlier so

you get more sleep?

The more you do to take care of your health, the more likely you are to keep your liver from getting worse. Hepatitis C or not, we all get one body, and the better we care for it, the more we benefit from this care. There has never been a better time for those with hepatitis C to take control. Hepatitis C treatments are curing most who try them, so why not give your liver some additional help with some lifestyle changes.

My hepatitis C was cured because of one of these new treatments. It was my third treatment, and although I credit the medication for curing me, I know that if I hadn't taken care of myself, I might not have lived long enough to be cured. Now that I am free of hepatitis C, my commitment to myself is even stronger. And yes, I made a New Year's resolution this year – a small one. I kicked off the year by participating in a 5K run/walk. I walked it. I have quite a few fitness events planned for the year. At the end of the year, we'll see if I am one of the 40 to 44 percent...

Wising you a happy, healthy New Year.

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