You’re Cured!

November 3, 2014 By John Rickman

These were the words I was waiting to hear and did hear when my doctor called me with my 6-month test results informing me I was negative/non-detectable for hepatitis C. I was on with the “trifecta” of weekly pegylated interferon injections, twice-daily doses of ribavirin, and daily dosages of sofosbuvir. The three-month regimen was brutal but worth it in the end. My personal blog discusses the side effects I experienced, and how I coped with them. Click here or on the “W” to your right under “John on the Web.” My current focus is on my continued recovery after the cure.

Treatment lengths are shorter with the addition of new drugs such as sofosbuvir (Sovaldi). While my treatment “only” lasted 3 months, it does take a toll on your body. HCV is a nasty virus and takes equally “nasty” or strong medications to rid your body of this disease. Because of this, you don’t just end treatment and wake up feeling like your old post-treatment-protocol self. On the contrary - in my case I was left extremely anemic. My red blood cell count plummeted and I had to pace myself and take breaks during normal everyday activities. However, I understand on the horizon there are new drugs being developed that will potentially shorten the hep C protocols even more, and help to eliminate some of the more difficult side effects such as anemia.

How you feel after completion of the hep C protocol is dependent on several factors. What was your health prior to beginning treatment, your age, were you already exhibiting signs of having the disease (fatigue, liver already in cirrhosis, etc.). Generally the worse you felt going into treatment, the longer the recovery after completion. My doctor told me some people feel well after three months, some six months; others may take a year. I don’t want to be a downer but some still don’t feel like themselves after several years have passed. I felt almost 100%, three months after the treatment ended and my red blood cell count was back within normal parameters. But, I worked on it hard. I modified my eating habits, worked out with weights and rode a bicycle or walked several times a week. I’m not a doctor or medical person so PLEASE before you do any of these things check and make sure you are healthy enough to begin any exercise program.

What worked and is working for me is a common sense approach. I cut out most processed and fast food along with sugar. I eat lean cuts of meat and fish, drink plenty of filtered water, and take a good multi-vitamin along with omega 3 fish oil. A month after treatment I began taking creatine again. My doctor had me discontinue the creatine during the 3 months I was in treatment. I work out with weights three days a week (I started out very light as I had lost a lot of strength during the hep. C protocol), and ride a bike or walk 2-3 days a week. I am convinced that staying active as much as possible is crucial to getting back to your old self after treatment is finished. Find what works for you. The road to recovery is the final part of being cured of hep. C. I will continue to post what is working for me and it is my sincere hope that it helps you in your life and your recovery.

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