Hepatitis C, Cirrhosis, Liver Tumor, and TACE

September 2, 2014 By Karen Hoyt

Transcatheter Arterial Chemoembolization is a mouthful! I like the nickname TACE. When I first began hearing about this particular way that a liver tumor could be treated, I thought of a taser. You know, like that gun the police chase unruly people with? I kind of like that image. **My liver cells are getting out of control. It is time to shut them down!** Seriously though, I learned quite a bit about the procedure and cannot wait to share it with you.

How are Tace procedures done? The TACE procedure is done by an Interventional Radiologist, also known as IR. The IR doc inserts a tiny catheter into the femoral artery at the top of your leg. They wind it through toward the Hepatic Artery. From there, they use X-Ray tech stuff called Angiography to follow the artery that is closest to the tumor. After they pinpoint the tumor, they may try to run more tiny catheters to the "branches" until they are right up on it. I picture a weak tumor surrounded by all these chemo cops and their TACE sticks.

What drugs are used in TACE procedures? After getting the tumor surrounded with one or more catheters, they start injecting what are called LC beads. These teeny tiny particles are soaked in chemotherapy drugs called Doxorubicin or Irinotecan. What these microspheres do is release the drug slowly over a several day time period. Tumor killing stuff! Dr. Lee had a little hourglass filled with them and I took a pic for you. BTW - the IR is the doctor who injects the beads. An oncologist is the one who prescribes the chemotherapy beads.

TACE is used for many different reasons. Sometimes the HCC is advanced. If the tumor is really large, this procedure can help to shrink it down to size. If it is not gone after one TACE, they will do a second one to make sure they get it all. This can help us in many ways. For example, I am hoping for a transplant. By shrinking or killing the tumor I have a better chance of staying alive til a donor organ becomes available.

It has been a month since they found the tumor. With the Pre-transplant work up last week, and then meeting my oncologist and Interventional Radiologist time has flown! I am ready to start killing that tumor!

In the meantime, I will dream on of shrunken tumors and rest in the hands of my medical team. TACE for Liver Tumor from Hepatitis and Cirrhosis is a proactive stance for me right now!

A big hug to all of you. Your messages and support about your experiences and/or fears about TACE have helped so much. I may not answer email so fast right now, but I love hearing from you always. Your best friend in the middle of every battle, xoxo Karen:)

Click on IHelpC.com to read this entire blog entry, including Karen’s visualization techniques and health updates.

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