Hepatitis C: Take Control and Talk Fast

February 8, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

All my possessions for a moment of time. ~ Queen Elizabeth I

23 seconds - This is the average time that a patient has to explain their symptoms before the doctor interrupts**.** You have hepatitis C which means you may have quite a bit to discuss. This means you have to prioritize your concerns. Make eye contact, speak clearly, and tell your medical provider what is most important first, and then keep going down the line.

Ex: My stomach hurts. I feel nauseous. I have had some diarrhea. I feel tired. I've missed a week of work.

Don't misuse your time this way. "Well, doc, I don't really know if this is something to worry about. It all started last year when I felt a twinge in my right side. I didn't think it was much to worry about, and I didn't want to bother you. Then I felt nauseous..." Your healthcare provider has a very limited amount of time and at this point, your conversation will likely be derailed without you having a chance to communicate.

Take control by being prepared.

For more suggestions, check out the *Hepatitis C Support Project's Factsheet Series* - Being an Effective Health Care Consumer: Maximizing Your Medical Appointments

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