What Hepatitis C Taught Me About COVID-19

April 20, 2020 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

I contracted hepatitis C in 1988. After three treatments, I was successfully cured in 2013. Hepatitis C was a life-defining experience, and taught me a great deal. Those lessons are helping me cope during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I'd like to share them with you.

Don't panic. I lived with fear for many years after contracting hep C. I learned firsthand that anxiety, worry and panic never improve a situation, and usually make matters worse. Yes, this is easier said than done. I've never been able to just 'snap out of anxiety.' What I am able to do is to cultivate a practice that helps to lessen stress and the feelings that accompany it. Visit lucindaporterrn.com for a few tips on how to remain calm during this pandemic.

Get the facts. When I first got hep C, I heard a great deal that turned out to be fabrication. The myths that are surrounding COVID-19 are astonishing. If I were to believe everything I read, either I would never leave the house or I would throw caution to the wind. The truth is somewhere in between, and it can be found at reputable sites such as, the CDC, WHO, and Johns Hopkins. Verify everything you hear on the news, from politicians, and especially social media. Hepmag.com provides fact-based information.

Soap and bleach are your friends. My biggest fear about having hep C was giving it to others. With COVID-19, my goal is to avoid getting it. Washing my hands, maintaining social distance, staying at home as much as possible, avoid touching my face, and cleaning surfaces that others may have touched should keep me safe. I am not fanatical with wiping down every grocery item I bring in to my house, but I do sanitize the grocery cart before I use it, especially items that will sit a few days before I touch them. I wear gloves and I wash my hands after I touch everything. Here are 7 ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Control what you can control. When I was first diagnosed, there was no treatment for hep C. Although I couldn't change my condition, I could change my health and my attitude. Controlling these factors helped immensely. Hep's section on Living Healthy with Hep C applies to everyone under all circumstances. We can maximize our health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cultivate patience. COVID-19 isn't going away tomorrow. Just like I learned to live with hep C, so I must with COVID-19.

I never thought I would live to see hepatitis C cured, but it came to pass. Anything is possible with COVID-19, particularly if we all do our part. Stay at home unless you have business being out. Stay healthy, be kind and stay sane.

If you want to read more about COVID-19 or other health-related issues, I am also blogging at LucindaPorterRN.com.

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