Hepatitis C: The first few days after treatment ends

September 10, 2015 By Grace Campbell

It's been a very odd time. For years I lived as a person with hepatitis C. For 20 or so weeks I lived as a person without hepatitis C. Right now, and for the next 12 weeks, I have no idea how to define myself. I can't define myself because I don't know if Viekira Pak, the treatment I've been on for hep C, has worked.

For months, the act of taking my tablets every day has been a safety net. While I have been taking those tablets I don't have hep C. All of a sudden I've lost my safety net. I even found myself thinking "I wonder if I could just stay on the tablets forever - just to be sure!". But as with all things finite, treatment has come to an end.

Back to the post-treatment oddities.

The first thing that struck me was not being tied to fixed mealtimes. The first night after treatment I came home at 6pm with Indian take-away crowing "Look at this! It's 6pm and we are EATING DINNER! We can eat any darned time we LIKE! We can eat at 9pm, 11pm! Finally, we are the MASTERS of TIME!"

The second thing I thought about was how free I was. No need to factor being somewhere to take tablets at a certain time. No need to remember to pack spares in my bag "just in case". No need to remember to fill the Little Old Lady (rm) pill box if I was going away, and the panicked checking once, twice, three times that it was in my luggage.

The last thing was that I had no idea what "well" felt like. I thought I was "well" pretty much right up to the point I was told I was pretty sick. So I don't know how to gauge how I'm responding to not having so many drugs rattling round my system.

It hasn't all been odd. Some things have been great!

My morning walks have been faster and I've actually enjoyed them rather than feeling I had to push myself to get them done. I think I've managed to get bit more done each day, but that has not included things I don't like doing, like cooking dinner.

I've managed to get into work for another day this week and last week, bringing my days worked back to four a week. I'm tired at the end of the week but it's not fatigue. I'm just tired like any 56 year old person would be after being busy.

I am forcing myself to get out and about more, rather than cocooning myself at home. That means I

actually go shopping (for food, nothing exciting) more than I have. I don’t dash in and dash out again to get home. I am starting to plan things I need to do and want to do, rather than thinking of everything I don’t want to do and adjusting my outings accordingly.

This is a brave new world. I hope for me it’s one free of hepatitis C.

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