Hepatitis C Treatment: When You Can't or Don't Want to Wait

September 24, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

The current treatment for hepatitis C consists of taking peginterferon and ribavirin. If you have genotype 1, then you take a third drug that is a protease inhibitor (either Incivek or Victrelis). The side effects of the current treatment are quite challenging, so much so that many hepatitis C patients are postponing treatment, opting to wait for interferon-free regimens.

Some patients can't wait, and are making the difficult choice to undergo short term pain for long term gain. Why would someone undergo hepatitis C treatment now, rather than wait? The reasons are numerous, but here are some examples:

- Patients with stage 3 or 4 liver disease
- Those who are looking for relief from hepatitis C symptoms
- Women who are hoping to start a family soon and want to have a hepatitis C-free pregnancy
- Recently infected individuals who want to intervene quickly to avoid liver damage
- Patients who want freedom from the burden of having hepatitis C, and want to put hepatitis C behind them.
- Aging patients who are concerned that further delays will hinder their future.

Although the current hepatitis C treatments are hard, they are doable. These treatments are also effective, with response rates around 80%. On the web-based groups I belong to, I frequently hear the wonderful news - "I'm cured." These are wonderful words to hear.

Good side effect management is the cornerstone of successful treatment. For those who are undergoing treatment now, be sure to include information and support as part of your hepatitis C treatment regimen. Blogs, support groups, and medical education sites offer a gold mine of information. There are many good places to get tips. Start with HEP.

In addition to information, you can ask questions on this site's hepatitis C forum. Four out of five people who undergo hepatitis C treatment now will succeed in putting hepatitis C behind them. Moreover, this means, they don't have to wait for the new treatments to be approved, because they are done. If you are one of those who is not waiting, may you too be saying, "I'm cured."

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