Hepatitis C Treatment Mile Markers

December 4, 2013 By Connie M. Welch

Hep C Warrior Connie

I discovered a very helpful way to get through Hep C Treatment with weekly achievable goals called Mile Markers.

The long haul of Hep C Treatment can be overwhelming. April 2012 I began triple therapy using the protease inhibitor Incivek (telaprevir), Peg Interferon and Ribavirin. Since I had done two prior treatments for Hep C I was prepared in many ways for this treatment but not totally.

The side effects from Incivek (telaprevir) which are used for the first 12 weeks only in triple therapy were harsh. Experiencing side effects and looking at months of treatment yet to go was overwhelming and discouraging for me. It was important NOT to focus at the long duration of treatment. I discovered several tips to make the time go by faster.

I focused on what I call, “Mile Markers.”

*The first major Mile Marker: whatever day of the week you started treatment, that is your Mile Marker Day. Mine was Monday.

I concentrated on getting through the day and checking it off my calendar. Each day brought me closer to the next until I reached my Mile Marker Day and completed another week. I reached the goal of getting to this important day of the week and mentally I picked up a victory flag and focused on getting to the Mile Marker Day.

Days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months. The old saying, “By the yard it’s hard, by the inch it’s a cinch,” is true. Small steps add up to great strides and big differences.

*The second major Mile Marker: completing the Incivek (telaprevir) part of triple therapy. This was a celebration. A big mile stone to get to.

*The third major Mile Marker: finishing a box or bottle of meds. What a joy it was to throw an empty box in the trash! Each box completed represented getting closer and closer to the goal line.

*The fourth major Mile Marker: blood work. I kept a chart of all my blood work so I could see a snapshot of how I was progressing with treatment. Every test was important but when the (RNA) viral load test was done, it was a big hurdle.

Don’t get Tripped Up

It is common all throughout treatment for blood work to fluctuate. Especially red and white blood counts can go up and down. If my levels were down, I had to wrap a new perspective around it and tell myself, the meds are working overtime killing the virus.

Red blood cells carry oxygen to the brain. When red blood cells go down fatigue becomes worse. Sometimes it’s necessary for medication adjustments to be done or the need to receive blood or red blood stimulant injections such as Procrit or Neupogen. If this occurs, Take Heart, don’t get discouraged. This too shall pass. You will get through it! Remember, this is a temporary time compared to the rest of your life.

Depression, anxiety, insomnia can also try to trip you up. The best way to approach this is tell yourself, “this is the meds working, it’s not me.”

The best offensive move I made was listening to my doctor who urged me to go on an Anti-Depressant while I was on treatment. I did not listen to this advice with my first two treatments and I suffered more because of my stubbornness. The Anti-Depressant made a huge difference to help relieve most of the depression, anxiety, and insomnia.

Anti-Depressants are a vital tool in helping with Hep C treatment side effects. They do take a few weeks to thoroughly get into your system so be patient. If side effects are still severe, talk to your doctor. Sometimes it’s necessary to adjust dosage or change to another medication. But help is out there, so take advantage of it. It may help you more than you know.

By focusing on your Mile Markers and not getting tripped up with side effects you can achieve the goal of getting through treatment. There is Hope and Life Beyond Hepatitis C.

I am presently 13 months Post Hep C Treatment and continue to be Non-Detected for the virus. See more of my story and others under Treatment Journey and Treatment Health Tips on Life Beyond Hepatitis C.

Do you have a Hep C Treatment Tip you can share?

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