Holiday and Health Problems

December 13, 2018 By Karen Hoyt

Karen Hoyt is a blogger who has a story about hepatitis C, cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, liver cancer, and liver transplantation. This excerpt first appeared on Karen's I Help C blog.

There's not a lot of Ho Ho Ho while being diagnosed or treated for liver disease. Celebrating the holiday and health problems flaring doesn't bring in tidings of great joy either. Don't cry or pout though, I can offer you a way to find holiday happiness, even with Hepatitis C. My first year was like the Nightmare at Christmas. Through it all, I found that there's something magical about the season – even when you're super sick, alone, and dealing with loss.

Holiday and Health Problems

My diagnosis came with a handful of other problems. First, I was newly single. Just before my liver failed, my husband wanted a divorce. Yes, I had been obscenely groggy with hepatic encephalopathy, and slept constantly, so I forgave him. I don't even remember much about it honestly. It was still a rough time for me to be alone after 30 years. Second, I was end stage decompensated, and couldn't teach full time.

No Mo Money

Because I took a part time assignment, there was no health insurance. Mine had been canceled during a hospitalization for ascites in October, and by December, the mailbox was full of medical bills. There were literally zero funds for presents. I was deep down in a super massive black hole of medical debt.

More Bad News

If that wasn't enough, my liver biopsy left me in pretty poor shape due to bruising from low platelets. Did I mention an endoscopy that revealed varices all the way into my stomach that could NOT be banded? If this sounds less than happy, wait – there's more.

If you are wondering where the happiness part comes in, click here to read the rest of Karen's blog.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.