Hope and New Drugs Defeat Hepatitis C

November 19, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

These days, I hear more and more patients say they responded to hepatitis C treatment, and I wondered what it would be like if my turn came. I have been through three treatments, and each generation of drugs is more effective. Well my turn came, and it feels great to say I am free of hepatitis C.

Here is a recap of my treatment and hepatitis C vitals:

I had hepatitis C for 25 years, genotype 1a, viral load greater than 8 million, and stage 2 fibrosis. This was my third treatment. The first was interferon monotherapy in 1997. I did not respond and stopped after three months. The second was 48 weeks of peginterferon and ribavirin in 2003. I relapsed in the post-treatment stage. This time I participated in a12-week clinical trial using sofosbuvir, ledipasvir, and ribavirin.

Although this was much easier than the two previous hepatitis C treatments, it was not without challenges. The rash and headache were easy to deal with. Sleep was impossible without the aid of modern chemistry. I was fatigued; my head was cloudy. I thought I handled treatment well, but my husband would testify in court that I was “difficult to be around.” Fortunately, I didn’t do anything illegal that would force him to testify in court.

The recovery period was swift and nearly immediately noticeable. Unlike peginterferon’s tedious aftermath of two-steps forward, one-step back, I felt better every day. I feel wonderful now, especially since I get to to announce my 24-week post-treatment follow-up results: hepatitis C is nondetectable.

I wish I was out of a job, but just because I am free of hepatitis C doesn’t mean that the world is. I feel like I have just begun. Now I have high-powered hope on my side and I want to spread this hope to all those who need it.

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