I’m done! i’m done? i’m done!?

May 11, 2015 By Rick Nash

This month I completed the Harvoni treatment, which was a heart pounding 24 weeks. The longest single treatment I’ve been on yet. My longest one, prior to this was Incivek at 17 weeks.

In total I’ve spent over a year of my life on treatment, and it’s been a roller-coaster ride the entire time.

As in every year, they add a new more dangerous yet exciting roller coaster.

Last week I also took my end of treatment blood test, and I should have the results back on Tuesday.

Okay Rick, that means you’re cured! Right!?

Well… no.

What. All of that, and it’s a no!!?

Yea, sorry viruses have a schedule all their own, and they don’t need no man!

No seriously, they can exist on surfaces for like 6 weeks on their own, which is more than some teenagers nowadays.

Anyway, the point is that there are essentially three(sometime four) test markers that determine success or failure.

The first marker is around a halfway point, or the first zero, whichever comes first.

The second crucial test is the end of treatment test, it determines if the treatment is immediately successful, so that’s two zeros needed.

The last marker… WAIIITTT!

Oh yea, there are two markers next, SVR 4 and SVR 12. SVR 4 is done four weeks post treatment it is done to make sure that the treatment worked, it’s about 99% accurate as a marker for Sustained Viral Response. End of Treatment and SVR 4 are important as if they fail they’re used in determining if another treatment, or if something else is needed.

SVR=Sustained Viral Response, I’ll get more into what that is later, but know it’s the closest thing to a cure with these bad boys.

SVR 12 is a blood test taken 12 weeks post treatment and SVR 12 is >99…% so it's an accurate marker, SVR 24 is clearly even better, but really not by much.

The RX I was taking, Harvoni, doesn't kill the virus. Only anti-bodies can do that. What Harvoni does is target a non-structural protein in the liver hindering the viruses ability to replicate.

This is a simple breakdown of SVR:

Think of the meds like this: If you have a house infested with ants, do you kill the ants themselves? Or do you poison their food supply? Or maybe even both!

It's a lot like that. New meds poison the food supply, and destroy the queen (the ability to reproduce)

So the Sustained Viral Response that occurs isn't so much an eradication of the virus, because the virus can linger for a while. Eventually without replication/reproduction, those viruses will die. The Sustained Viral Response (SVR) is the goal of any treatment, and I cannot wait for SVR 12.

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