Medications for Liver Disease

I've taken just about everything that they give someone with complications from liver disease.

August 15, 2019 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 post first appeared on Karen's I Help C blog.

So much has changed since my liver failed in 2010. There was a lot of medications for liver disease in the beginning. By eating right, I finally weaned onto lower doses. I went off and on some of them. It was a seesaw for sure. I've taken just about everything that they give someone with complications from liver disease from NASH, fatty, hepatitis, and autoimmune liver disease.

There is no really cure for liver disease or for any of the above listed causes of cirrhosis. There is a cure for hepatitis C virus, and I was able to clear that on some of the older drugs. The new treatment on DAAs is quick and sure to help almost everyone with every genotype. So when we have to take medications for liver disease, it's because we probably have cirrhosis. Let's break it down.

Compensated or Decompensated

If you have liver disease with bridging fibrosis stage F1 or F2, you probably aren't on meds. Your body and liver are doing okay. If your body no longer compensates for your ailing liver, you become decompensated. After that, you might be F3 or F4, or even end stage. You could need medications for liver disease to help you feel better.

Medications for Cirrhosis

Diuretics — When my kidneys and liver got overwhelmed, my body held fluid. First my feet and hands, then my whole body and belly were full of water. After a paracentesis, drain, or "tap," as they are called, I had to take two diuretics three times a day to keep ascites down.

Spironolactone — This is a potassium sparing diuretic that helps to move fluid out of your body while protecting your potassium levels.

Lasix or furosemide is used to reduce the fluid through your urine.

Beta blockers — A severe case of portal vein hypertension can cause esophageal bleeding. In their case a doctor may prescribe a beta blocker to be taken once or twice daily. They can reduce the pressure in your portal vein, which lowers the risk of a bleedout.

Metoprolol, nadolol, or propanolol — These are the top beta blockers. I took nadolol only after a bleedout and the endoscopy showed varices that could not be banded. I was on them for most of the years right up until my liver transplant in 2015.

Lactulose — I learned to take swigs throughout the day to keep the ammonia off my brain. I hated the stuff, and would do almost anything to get my dosage reduced. It's hard to keep a healthy weight up when you're in the bathroom all the time.

Xifaxin — For hepatic encephalopathy, this pill is expensive, but it works. I got a card from the pharmacy to help pay for it. It cleared up my brain fog. Check out my YouTube on that.

That's All, Folks

These are the only medications for liver disease that I took. Your doctor can guide to what is best for you. Between the diuretics and the lactulose, I was on the go. The beta blockers kept my bleedouts down between bandings. After liver cancer, I switched out to a whole different set of meds. Now I'm only on immunosuppressants and other transplant drugs. That's another lifetime, it seems. I love you all. No matter what, we're together. xo Karen

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/blog/medications-liver-disease