Newly Diagnosed with Hepatitis C, What Do I Do Next?

January 10, 2018 By Connie M. Welch

The 1st step after being diagnosed is learning what is hepatitis C.

The term Hepatitis means inflammatory or infection of the liver which can be caused by chemicals, drugs or viruses.

There are five viruses labeled A through E. Viruses A and E can be contracted from contaminated water or food, while viruses B, C, D are transmitted by direct contact into the bloodstream.

Heavy alcohol use, toxins, and certain medical conditions can also cause hepatitis. Hepatitis C is caused by a virus that attacks the liver causing damage and function impairment.

When first infected a person can develop what is known as an “acute” infection, which can range in severity from very mild with few or no symptoms to a serious condition. Acute means a short term illness that lasts within a short amount of time.

According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, 15%-25% of people “clear” the virus without treatment. Approximately 75%-85% of people who become infected with the Hepatitis C virus develop “chronic,” or lifelong, infection.

Chronic meaning it is a long term condition. Chronic Hepatitis C can lead to serious liver damage including liver function impairment, liver scarring (cirrhosis), liver cancer or liver failure. It is estimated that over 4 million Americans have Chronic Hepatitis C (HCV).

Worldwide, approximately 175 million people have HCV. Most people do not know they are infected. It is known as the “silent killer” due to symptoms do not appear for some time and often mask other conditions. Hepatitis C virus is one of the highest causes of chronic liver disease and liver transplants in the United States.

The 2nd step is finding a physician who specializes in liver disease... Click here to read the rest of this blog, originally published on Life Beyond Hepatitis C (reprinted with permission).

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