Pegasys+Ribavirin Treatment Begins!

January 9, 2007 By Mark de Solla Price

After a little over a month delay to deal with my polycythemia and a week more to wrestle with the insurance company, this morning a styrofoam cooler arrived by overnight messenger from the specialty pharmacy with four pre-filled syringes of Pegasys (refrigerated) and two bottles of Ribavirin capsules and assorted other goodies.

This afternoon, I had a previously scheduled appointment with Paul Chambliss, my main doctor, and I had lots to review with him covering the four other doctors I've seen in the last month. As usual, I had a whole check list of things to go over together.

My HDL (good cholesterol) is a little low (25) and Pedro DeArmas, my cardiologist, wants to add Niaspan, but we're going to wait until the Pegasys+Ribavirin settles down. I've also noticed that I've recently got edema (water retention) in my legs and hands, so we add a blood test to check that out. I've been gaging on stuff caught in my tonsils, even though I had them out last year, so Paul wants me to see Stacey Silvers, the really wonderful surgeon who did my tonsillectomy. The rest of our items were housekeeping stuff: Insurance paperwork, changes in insurance procedures, insurance referral forms, prescriptions, etc.

I'm ready, but I'm more than a little nervous because of all the nasty potential side effects, so Vinny took me out to dinner at DoJo, a local healthy Japanese restaurant on Washington Square that we like, and over Shrimp Curry Yakisoba with Raspberry Ice Green Tea, I swallowed my newly expanded collection of dinner pills, including Tylenol and Benadryl to ward off some of the potential new side-effects.

I on the way home, I started to feel a little dizzy and soft-focus, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. While I type this in I'm letting the refrigerated syringe warm to room temperature. Not that any of the tons of instructions they sent suggested doing so, but I know cold injections hurt like hell.

So here goes...

The injection was painless -- I'm used to giving subcutaneous injections by now. So far, so good. I'll post an update tomorrow.

Tonight's dinner pills are: (top row) Truvada, 2 Viramune, 2 Ziagen, Tricor (lowers cholesterol), low dose Aspirin (thins blood), Proscar (reverses hair loss), (middle row) 2 Quinapril HCL (lowers blood

pressure), 2 Tylenol, 2 Benadryl, 3 Ribavirin, (bottom row) 8 K-Pax capsules (custom multi-vitamins for HIV disease)

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