Post Liver Transplant Protein and Healing

May 6, 2015 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 excerpt first appeared on Karen's I Help C blog, April 22, 2015.

It is my 9th day post liver transplant and I'm so excited to share what healing foods can help us recover from surgery. Everything about my body, and my life, feels different. You have got to know that a Liver Loving Diet will always be my aim.

Spring is a time of transformation. The dormant trees awaken from their winter's nap. The dead and lifeless seeds were scattered last year. Now they are stirred deep within the ground. They stretch toward their entrance on our planet's stage. Flowers, vegetables, and herbs come up from planted seeds and begin to prepare nutritional goodness to help us remain strong. Some come up "volunteer", as my grandma used to say. She used the word to teach me how strawberries put on new runners every year. They were eager to volunteer to help us have sweet goodness by the 4th of July.

I'm still taking pain meds although I try and space them further apart. They can leave me feeling sluggish mentally and also with my bowels. My day starts and ends with bunches of immunosupressants, steroids, antibiotics, and everything it takes to keep my body in a stable condition. Talk about major drugs and lots of them!

There are 2 major areas of focus after transplant. Protein and vitamins.
During surgery of any kind, the incision is made and there is a whole lot of movement going on. Several muscles are cut. Even the diaphragm is split for a liver transplant. They move this organ over and poke and prod on that one. One organ is surgically removed, another is scooted around. The liver I received was a perfect fit. It slid in nicely, with little room left over. They inserted the drainage tubes and closed me up. Now it is up to me to eat well and rest to help my body make new connections to repair and heal.

This takes protein. I'm right where I have always been in the familiar liver loving diet. Eggs, fish, chicken, nuts, grains, and yogurt have been my mainstay. I brought my protein bars with me to the hospital and went straight to them 48 hours after surgery.

The protein is front-line in rebuilding connective tissue. Wounds and incisions are all closed up with sutures. As the tissue repairs, it will take a LOT of protein. My transplant coordinator Clay said to eat as much as I can tolerate. I'm doing it! I asked how many grams per day and he said just eat healthy protein. I'm at about 75 grams per day all from healthy sources.

To read Karen's original entire blog entry "Post Liver Transplant Protein and Healing," click here.

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