Preparing for Hep C Treatment

September 20, 2020 By Connie M. Welch

Being diagnosed with Hep C, testing and preparing for Hep C treatment is what we consider phase 1 of the Hep C journey. Preparing for Hep C treatment is half the battle and very important. You are laying a good foundation for treatment as you prepare well.

Here are some important tips for preparing for your Hep C treatment:

- After diagnosis is confirmed with your doctor and all testing has been done, as a patient, you have the right to receive copies of all your medical tests and records. You may wish to keep a file for reference to track your progress.
- Depending on your genotype, liver condition, and any past Hep C treatment history, your doctor will discuss which Hep C treatment is best suited for you.
- Discuss with your doctor all your current medications and ask if there are any drug interactions relating to the Hep C treatment recommended for you. Reference the pharmaceutical company or other credible medical resources about drug interactions you are currently taking in relation to treatment medications. If you are not sure, ask your pharmacist or call the pharmaceutical support line to verify. Explain which medications you are taking and any medical conditions you have.
- Discuss with your doctor any medical conditions you have and concerns relating to treatment. Refer to questions listed and any other questions you have.
- Be proactive and find out ahead what side effects there are for your treatment. It’s best to be prepared ahead just in case you experience any of these. You will not be alarmed if you know it is normal for treatment.
- Find out from your doctor, pharmaceutical support line, or other credible medical resource what you can use to help relieve side effects in case they occur. Most side effects if they occur

normally cycle out and get better. Remember to take treatment one step, one day and week at a time. You're in the process of fighting the virus and heading toward your cure.

- Discuss with your doctor in detail about treatment side effects in relation to depression, anxiety, insomnia, etc. depending on the type of treatment medications used, some treatments can cause chemical side effects such as depression, anxiety, even anger, or insomnia especially if interferon or ribavirin are used.

Many specialists recommend taking an anti-Depressant or anti-Anxiety medication while on treatment to lessen these side effects and help the patient with relief. Remember Hep C treatment are strong meds which cause chemical reactions, this is not an emotional or mental issue.

Don't be ashamed or embarrassed to talk to your doctor about taking an Anti-depressant or Anti-anxiety medication, these are tools to ease side effects and help you get through treatment.

Once treatment is completed, your doctor can advise how to step down off of the Anti-depressant or anti-anxiety meds. They served their purpose as a useful tool for you during treatment.

Some doctors recommend beginning an anti-depressant three weeks prior to beginning Hep C treatment in order to get in your system, and work properly for you before you start treatment.

If you're taking an anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medication let your doctor know if you're experiencing problems. Sometimes medication or dose adjustments are necessary while on treatment.

It is important to note that not all patients' treatment experiences are the same and you may not have any of these side effects but it's always best to be informed and prepared with a plan to help you get through your Hep C treatment. Majority of the new treatments out now have very few side effects compared to older treatments. So even if you have done treatment in the past and experienced side effects, treatment with new medications will be different and most cases a lot easier.

- Communicate how you're feeling during Hep C treatment so your doctor will know best how to help you if you are dealing with any side effects.
- Discuss with your doctor what tests will be done, before, during and after your treatment.
- Discuss with your doctor the recommended treatment regimen and length for your treatment.
- After you have discussed with your doctor which treatment is best suited for your condition, and when to begin treatment, the doctor's office can help with paper work necessary to order your

treatment meds from the pharmacy or specialty pharmacy.

Hep C treatment medications cannot be purchased outright. They can only be obtained through a prescription to your pharmacy or specialty pharmacy, which is provided from your physician who is licensed to practice in the country where the treatment medication has been approved for use.

All Hep C patients on treatment will need to be monitored and regularly tested by their physicians while in treatment and post treatment recovery.

If you need financial assistance for your treatment medications or co-pays, there are resources available to help you. Here at lifebeyondhepc.com we can provide a list of credible patient assistance programs to help you with your treatment medication. Don’t allow financial need to keep you from seeking assistance and moving forward with treatment. There are resources to help.

*Get connected to a support group. A support group is made of Hep C patients and professionals who can help you as you prepare for treatment as well as going through treatment and recovery. There are many online support groups as well as some physical groups depending on your area.

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