



Seven Secrets to Hepatitis C Treatment

August 15, 2016 By [Lucinda K. Porter RN](#)

I tend to distrust headlines and articles that claim knowledge of secrets that will make something easier, solve a problem or unlock a mystery. One exception to this is “X-number of things you can do with duct tape,” which really is the secret to just about everything. Although I have not found duct tape to be useful during hepatitis C treatment, I suppose if I dropped a bottle of pills, duct tape would help me pick them up.

But, I am digressing. Digression was something I did a lot during hepatitis C treatment. Focus was difficult. My mind jumped from one subject to another, unraveling any hope of completing a single task. I sure wish I could have fastened my thoughts with duct tape.

So, here is my list of seven secrets to hepatitis C treatment:

Secret # 1 is patience. There are always opportunities for frustration and short-temperedness. During treatment, I was easily triggered by computer glitches, politics, and people (which means I was pretty much aggravated by everything). To keep my cool, I let the moment pass. The practice of restraint of pen and tongue saved me many times. One way to regain my patience was to promise myself that I could be as irritable as I wanted to after I finished treatment. If patience failed, I ‘d consider covering my mouth with duct tape during a ribavirin rant.

Secret #2 is support. I was supported by an amazing network of people who knew I was on hep C treatment and how the drugs affected me. They checked in with me, let me complain, and saturated my sorry self with tons of love.

Secret #3 is to stay open-minded. I am a reformed know-it-all, and when I was on treatment, I latched on to my opinions. For instance, I am a reluctant pill-taker. I particularly avoid antihistamines because they make me drowsy. During treatment I developed a rash, and decided to trust my doctor and take her advice regarding antihistamines. I started at 1/2 the lowest dose of hydroxyzine (Atarax), and a full dose at bedtime. The rash resolved, and I slept better and felt better.

Secret #4 is perspective. Compared to my prior hepatitis C treatments, the new ones are a breeze. Even on hard days, Harvoni with ribavirin was easier than taking interferon. When I experienced a side effect, I’d try to put it in perspective. I reminded myself that I was getting well, and that treatment was short. What are a few months, compared to an entire life?

Secret #5 is to practice distraction and self-soothing. Baroque concertos and hot tea soothed my

frenzied self, reminding me that the world is filled with joy. When spring rolled around, a light breeze carried through an open window helped to settle me down. Binge-watching shows on Netflix helped too.

Secret # 6 is gratitude. For many years, I've kept a gratitude list. At the end of every day, I write down some things for which I am grateful. This was especially helpful if I had a hard day during hepatitis C treatment.

Secret # 7 is the pursuit of humor. Humor is the playful practice of acceptance. If I laugh at the ridiculously amazingly brave me who is making some silly mistakes, then clearly I have accepted myself. Once I've done that, I can have fun thinking of things I can do with duct tape.

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