How I Survived COVID-19 with a Liver Transplant

It’s beyond insane that in spite of everything I’ve learned, I still got COVID-19. Please read everything to see what else I discovered.

January 23, 2021 By Karen Hoyt

How I survived COVID-19 with a liver transplant began by eating a Liver Loving Diet. You knew that was coming, but there’s more. I also give a lot of credit to singing. There is a method to my madness, so read on. After spending the whole year safeguarded from the outside world, I ended up with getting exposed at home during the first week of December. My oldest granddaughter came to spend a few nights with us, and we knew that her friend group got sick around Thanksgiving. She had gotten tested, and finished her quarantine time, so we felt safe. My husband and I were shocked as we felt the virus coming on. Joe is in the best health of his life. We both work out a lot and feel very young for our age. We were still so stinking sick.

Essential Things I ALWAYS Do Anyway

Talk to my transplant team about any changes

Get my labs done

Eat a low sugar and sodium + healthy protein diet

Teach Tai Chi and Yoga weekly and also do cardio exercise

Laughter, Prayer, and Meditation are the best medicine, and I use all 3 generously.

Liver Disease Advocacy and the AASLD

Studying liver disease and COVID-19 was literally a full time job for me over the last year. Heck, I am the patient representative for a group of world renowned physicians, clinicians, and surgeons who have met faithfully and discussed every aspect of COVID-19 and the liver. You can access the patient facing documents here at the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease (AASLD) website and foundation. You can also learn from the compiled registries and data in 2021.

It’s beyond insane that in spite of everything I’ve learned, I still got it. But just like with Hepatitis, liver cancer, and a transplant – whatever I learn, will eventually get shared. I hope that these how-to’s will help you, or at least reduce your fears. They will apply to immunosuppression, and

possibly for other types of liver disease as well. I'll write more about the timeline later. Right now, this is the first day I've felt up to publishing a blog, since the fatigue comes and goes.

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Don't wait for a positive test. I lived for 11 days knowing I had COVID-19, but my Rapid Test was negative. Trust YOURSELF and call your team.

Sleep often and anywhere. Hubby and I both felt like 10-12 hours a night was a minimum. We work from home, and dozed instead of having lunch.

My COVID-19 was more severe due to immune suppression. I was wiped out and had every symptom.

Drink a gallon of water a day. I started the day with a cup of coffee and then drank water.

I dropped Cell Cept for 2 weeks. While I was thinking my test was negative, I actually slept through 2 doses of Prograf. I set an extra alarm after that. I can't wait to get my labs done to see how this has affected my liver enzymes and creatnine, and all of that.

Use a protein shake to help your body heal. We needed 60 + grams per day.

We were NOT hungry, felt nauseated and food tasted awful. The protein and vitamins were life saving.

A general multi-vitamin, PB 8 Probiotic, zinc, extra C, Vitamin D3, melatonin, and aspirin alternated with Tylenol. (No more than 80 micrograms aspirin OR 1,500 milligrams of Tylenol per day.)

The Tylenol knocked the edge off of our fever and body aches. Did I mention headache from hell for 10 days? Like an icepick and a chisel. Baby aspirin didn't help with pain, but was used alternately with melatonin to reduce the risk of blood clotting. Thank you Dr. Donnica.

We used Benadryl (mine is children's liquid). I also used Robitussin. Joe had the cough, but mine quickly became thick and the expectorant helped. I've had pneumonia before and can tell you this felt like "walking pneumonia." My chest was on fire and I had severe shortness of breath. I was panting for air during the worst of it.

To read the rest of this blog, click here.

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