How to Talk to Your Doctor About Hep C

November 11, 2020 By Connie M. Welch

Prepare for your doctor's appointment ahead. A helpful tool in preparing for your doctor's appointment is making a list of questions ahead of time. Take your list of questions with you to your appointment and if possible, take someone with you who can help ask questions and keep notes.If seeing your primary care physician, you need to ask to see a liver specialist like a hepatologist or gastroenterologist. They specialize in liver disease.

Questions you may consider asking your doctor:

1. What type of tests do I need and why?
2. Do I have acute or chronic hepatitis C?
3. What are my liver enzyme levels and what does this mean for my liver condition?
4. What is my genotype (the type of Hep C virus strain I have) and what treatment is available for my genotype?
5. Will I need a liver biopsy or Fibroscan to assess damage to my liver?
6. Do I have liver damage? If so, how much liver damage is present?
7. Do you recommend treatment? If not, why? If you recommend treatment, which treatment is best suited for my genotype and liver condition? What do I need to know about this treatment? Side Effects, Length of Treatment? What tests will be run during treatment?
8. How will this treatment interact with my other medications I am currently taking?
9. Will this treatment interfere with any medical condition I already have?
10. How will you know if the treatment is working for me? When will I get results?
11. What should I do if I have side effects? How can I manage side effects?
12. What are symptoms I should pay attention to and look out for?
13. Will I be able to work and continue with my normal activities while on this treatment?
14. Do I need to be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B and annual Flu shot prior to treatment? Do those living in the house with me need to be vaccinated as well?
15. How likely is it that I will develop cirrhosis or liver cancer?
16. How often do I need to come in for physical check up's, blood work and other tests?
17. What medications or other substances should I avoid?
18. Depending on my liver condition, do I need to lose weight, or be on a special diet?
19. Does my family need to be tested for hepatitis C?
20. We would like to start a family, do you recommend we wait until after treatment, if so, how long? How will Hep C or treatment affect us getting pregnant?
21. What do you recommend for safe sex practice to prevent transmitting Hep C?
22. How do I talk to my spouse, family, friends, boss, and co- workers about my Hep C and treatment?
23. When can I start treatment?

Ask your doctor for copies of your test and blood work reports. As a patient, you have the right to copies of all your medical records and tests. This serves as a good reference to you. Remember, YOU are your best advocate. Be informed about Hep C, tests and what you need to do to move forward with taking care of yourself and get treatment.

What other questions do you have about Hep C? Have you talked to your doctor about your Hep C? Share your experience and tips.

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