The waiting game - 2 week blood tests

April 7, 2015 By Grace Campbell

Tuesday
Despite what you might think, I am a complete bundle of nerves waiting for the results of my 2 week blood tests. I'm much better at handing out advice about being calm than I am actually following it!

I'd feel more comfortable if I had less unusual side effects. Some of the usual suspects - the nausea and fatigue - have presented themselves. The more I have rested over the weekend, the better I've felt. Today I feel less nauseated than at any time since starting the treatment. I feel quite normal.

Some of the more common ones - skin irritations, headaches, insomnia - haven't knocked on my door at all.

I major in the unusual side effects. The ones no one else gets.

The big one is my bilirubin level. I don't need a blood test to know it's high. I just have to look into the mirror. My eyes became slightly jaundiced at the end of Week 1, increased a bit in Week 2 and so far are holding steady. It'd be nice if they started going back to their usual colour, which is tired 55 year old blue. While it's not unusual for people to have increased bilirubin (approx 10%), only 1% or less get big, big increases. Finally, I am part of the 1%.

I flicked an email off to the nurse letting her know how I was travelling today and she said they would watch my bilirubin carefully in light of the symptoms. I was popping in to see them either Friday or Monday anyway so that's good. I'm glad that's organised.

But it made me quite panicky.

Wednesday
Would you like to know the results? I got them today. Now I don't want you to pass out about the bilirubin, okay. We're looking into it. But it was 152. They're doing a blood test that measures conjugated and unconjugated bilirubin levels. I'm no medical type but the nurse told me sometimes levels like that can be caused by something called haemolysis. I'm also off to get an abdominal U/S to check for weirdness, blockages and anything out of the ordinary. Finally, I'll see the hepatologist at the hospital.

My Hg is 123. Still within normal range, but a drop from 143 at the start of treatment. Not unexpected.

Good news are my LFTs
ALT has dropped from 137 to 42
AST has dropped from 185 to 46.

Wow.

The viral load result takes a while to come in so I’m expecting it next week. I’m hoping for a drop.

The doctor has decreased my ribavirin to see if that helps at all.

So, a good news, not so good news scenario.

I keep having to come back to my creed: I’m doing everything I can to help myself get better.

Some things are in the lap of the gods and I can’t help that. Fight your own battles. Don’t borrow trouble. Take each day as it comes. Focus on the positive. Get a haircut and get a real job (okay, I’m joking about the last one but I do enjoy the song).

I do what I usually do when faced with things that make me anxious. I cuddle my cat, go for a walk, chat to my dog and undertake mindless activities that require little skill but a level of concentration.

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