Tips on What to Expect & How to Prepare for Hep C Treatment

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The first week or so of treatment is generally the adjustment phase your body goes through with getting used to the treatment medications. Patients can experience more side effects from treatment meds during this time. The most common side effects reported with new treatment meds are headache and fatigue. Other side effects can possibly be experienced like mild bouts of nausea, diarrhea, and insomnia.

In the first couple of weeks, some patients report having little to no side effects while some report headaches that decrease and go away after a period of time. Fatigue is the number one most reported side effect for all Hep C treatment that can last throughout treatment. But most Hep C patients report being able to work full time and maintain their normal routine during treatment.

Tips on What to Expect & How to Prepare for Hep C Treatment

1. Prior to beginning treatment, find out what possible side effects are associated with your specific treatment medication that way if you do experience any you'll be prepared.
2. Just in case you need to take some days off from work, make sure to talk to your employer ahead and let them know you're starting treatment. You may not need to take off any, but it's always best to be prepared just in case.
3. Talk to your doctor prior to starting treatment about side effects and if they can prescribe what over the counter meds or prescriptions are best for you to take in case you experience side effects. Purchase and have these on hand just in case you might need them.
4. Let family and friends know you're starting treatment and ask if needed, would they be willing to help pick up things from the store, run errands or help around the house and yard in case you experience side effects. If someone offers to help, don't be shy, let others help.
5. Prepare some meals ahead by stocking your pantry, fridge, and freezer with ready to go meals just in case you're experiencing side effects you won't have to worry about fixing meals. Healthy and nutritious meals are best. Try to avoid processed junk food.
6. Just in case you might need it, stock some Gingerale or 7up at home or office, and keep crackers or something light for your stomach. Often times keeping something on your stomach can help you avoid stomach upset while taking medication.
7. Plan some rest stops. Rest is an essential part of treatment. Your body needs it.
8. Drink plenty of pure water during treatment and recovery. At least 64 ounces a day. You can drink coffee, tea, and soft drinks just don't count these for your water. Drinking water helps hydrate and flush your body during treatment which is very important. Infusing water with fruit is a great way to change up your water.

9. If you’re doing treatment in the summer or high humid temps, be sure to limit how long you are out in the direct sun and hot temps. Hot weather and high humidity often drain energy when on treatment.
10. Keep your calendar marked for your blood work and doctor appointments. Keep a notepad out to jot down reminders.
11. Whatever day you begin treatment is your Mile Marker Day of the week. Keep your focus on 1 day at a time, 1 week at a time. For example; If you begin treatment on a Monday, Monday is your Mile Marker day. At the end of the day mark off each day from your calendar and keep your focus on getting to the next Monday, you will see how quickly each week will go by when you focus on getting to your next Mile Marker Day and checking off another week. This helps you not focus on the long haul of treatment but concentrate on each week’s victories.
12. Keep your mind on positive and uplifting thoughts. Don’t watch depressing, violent, or scary movies during treatment, these tend to affect your thought process which is more sensitive during treatment.
13. Get connected to a support group with those who understand what you’re going through. Support is a vital part of healing. We host a weekly online support group; Hep C Warriors Friday Forum Support Group.
14. Keep focused on God’s Word by writing down scriptures on cards and keep them where you’ll see them throughout the day. Keep a Thankfulness and/or Treatment journal. Journaling is a therapeutic tool to use during treatment and recovery which will help you daily.

If you do happen to experience any side effects or not feel well for a time, remember, this is temporary! It will pass. Just because you feel this way right at this moment, doesn’t mean you’ll feel this way throughout treatment. Take treatment one day at a time.

You are in it to win it! Keep focused on reaching your goal which is the cure! You can do this!!

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