Hepatitis C, Cirrhosis and Dental Work

September 12, 2014 By Karen Hoyt

"*Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.*"- Leo F. Buscaglia

Getting Dental Work with Hepatitis C and Cirrhosis is important. It is not always easy to keep smiling with Liver Disease. When dealing with hep c, or anything that threatens to bring you down, it's easy to lose your smile. In addition, the virus, and hep c treatment, is hard on your teeth and gums. There are a few things we can do about that, because it is so important to smile. You can do it in spite of your physical health and less than beautiful teeth. Two of my favorite smiles are the Mona Lisa smile (she doesn't even show her teeth), and Mother Teresa's open hearted smile.

Having Dental Work with Hepatitis C and Cirrhosis may be the last thing on your mind. Our teeth and gums can get in horrible shape if we do not get it done. Here are tips on how to endure - and smile - while sick with the Hepatitis C Virus.

1. Use a soft child's toothbrush or a Waterpik if you have one. Soft dental tape is gentler than waxed floss. This is especially true if you have bleeding gums. Brush after every meal to keep your gums strong and guard against bacteria.

2. Use a gentle or sensitive toothpaste and mouthwash. I used Biotene products for dry mouth. Tom's also makes great natural products. If you are on a low sodium diet, do not use baking soda! It contains a lot of salt. You may want to use mouthwash several times daily also. I know that flouride gets a bad rap, but it can help protect your teeth. Swish it around and spit it out. Following up by rinsing with water can help too! You can find lots of brands that carry an alcohol free mouthwash now too!

3. Get a cleaning before and after treatment. Some dentists will not clean during treatment due to bleeding and platelet problems. I did not get mine cleaned during treatment. Be sure and talk to your doctor and dentist about it. I have heard of doctors who will not start Hepatitis treatment until all dental work is done.

4. Eat well. Malnourishment can cause gums to be in bad shape. Eat a variety of healthy foods and take whatever vitamins and supplements that your doctor will allow. Try and reduce the amount of sugary foods that you eat. Don't forget that many of our drinks contain a lot of sugar too!

5. Don’t be afraid of having excessive dental work before or after treatment. I know it’s a tough price to pay for attempting to get rid of the Hepatitis C Virus. Treatment in general attacks your whole body and your mouth is not excluded. If you cannot afford it, ask for a payment plan or go to a local health clinic. Do not live with a painful swollen toothache. Don’t let sadness keep you from smiling either.

Smiling is a wonderful gift we give to ourselves and to others. Never be ashamed of your smile. American’s are so caught up with movie star teeth. That is unrealistic. In most countries it is not even important. Hiding your smile behind your hand can create feelings of shame or embarrassment. Imperfect teeth are normal. Let that smile out! Start practicing today.

Don’t put off Getting Dental Work with Hepatitis C and Cirrhosis. Flash that big beautiful smile on everyone you see! xoxo Karen:)

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