

Hepatitis C and the Road to Recovery

Kelly Pomeroy, M.H.

A little over a week ago I was in beautiful North Carolina with the School of Natural Healing at a Mother Earth expo. We met a wonderful array of people, inviting all to learn more of the school and its courses. They came with their own fascinating stories and health concerns. This article is written to address one such concern regarding Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a virus that infects the liver. There are several different kinds of Hepatitis, letters A-F currently, depending on the virus strand. They differ in their disease transmission and the symptoms acquired. However, the liver and the immune system are the main parts affected by Hepatitis. Hepatitis C is a blood borne virus. It can be transmitted by needles, through body fluids and sexual activity and in very rare cases, contaminated water supplies as report by the AMA. Those at high risk are current or former drug users, chronic hemodialysis patients, children born to HCV mothers, persons with HIV, anyone using unsterilized needles from tattoo or acupuncturists or individuals with multiple sexual partners.

The symptoms of HCV are not always noticeable at first. It may even remain dormant in the system for years. Symptoms can be jaundice (yellowing of the eyes, skin and dark urine), stomach pain, loss of appetite, nausea or fatigue. To be diagnosed with this virus you will need to have blood tests taken by your health professional.

Between 15-25% of people who are infected clear the infection from their body within weeks without treatment. However, 70-85 % of individuals become chronically infected with this disease. It has even caused death. The CDC suggested that chronic HCV is due to their immune system's health. They have no vaccine for disease prevention. **The best way to prevent HCV** it is to avoid the behaviors that spread the disease such as: drug use, reusing unsterile needles, unprotected sexual activity or sexual activity with multiple partners.

Those with HCV have a weakened immune system and their liver is infected. Here are aids to these areas of our bodies;

Our immune systems are at their best when we are getting sufficient rest and work, eating nutrient rich and vitalizing foods and eliminating unhealthy stress, lifestyles and habits in our lives. When we compromise this system we leave ourselves with increased vulnerability to disease. Here are some herbs I recommend you taken often and consistently to help rebuild and support the immune system, especially to those with Hepatitis C.

Immune boosting herbs: Garlic, Echinacea, Astragalus, Elder Berry, Ginseng, probiotics or fermented foods, Ashwaganda(stress), Licorice Root(stress) and more.

The liver plays a huge role in our blood processes. Aging red blood cells are broken down in the spleen and somewhat in the liver to a substance called bilirubin. The liver separates the bilirubin from the blood stream. It is then transported in bile that is excreted through your gallbladder to the intestines and lastly, as waste in your stool. Jaundice happens when the liver is unable to remove bilirubin from the blood quickly enough. It floods the bloodstream and weakens the body's vitality. When the liver is taxed or infected we experience jaundice, digestive problems and/or fatigue. Here are some herbs I recommend you take often and consistently to support and restore liver health, especially those with Hepatitis C.

Liver supporting herbs: Milk Thistle, Dandelion, Oregon Grape Root, Barberry, Yarrow, Turmeric, Yellow Dock and more.

While it is important to take these herbs to restore your health, nothing has a more lasting effect than how you choose to live your life daily. Dr. Christopher has said, "Our bodies must be kept clean, inside and out, to perform their tasks efficiently and smoothly." Now is the time to consider our ways and make necessary changes in our lifestyles, diets and habits. Choosing nutrient rich foods, appropriate sleep and exercise, healthy moral habits and positive emotional health helps us feel happier, healthier and be an influence for good to those around us. Other aids I recommend are Dr. Christopher's Three Day Cleanse and Dr. Christopher's Extended Herbal Cleanse. Gaining health knowledge is another great way to improve health. Come check out our school and the classes we offer! Best wishes to you and yours on your journey to greater health!

Kelly Pomeroy is a graduated Master Herbalist, student adviser for the School of Natural Healing and mother to four awesome kids!