

**(The Gender Centre advise that this article may not be current and as such certain content, including but not limited to persons, contact details and dates may not apply. Where legal authority or medical related matters are cited, responsibility lies with the reader to obtain the most current relevant legal authority and/or medical publication.)**

## Preparing to Avoid Side-Effects of Hep C Treatment

by Adrian Rigg, Freelance Health Writer and Contributor to *Hep Review* magazine. This article was reprinted from *Hep Review*  
Article appeared in Polare magazine: October 2014 Last Update: November 2014 Last Reviewed: November 2014

**T**here are strategies to minimise treatment side effects; the more you know about this before starting treatment, the better. You cannot overstate the importance of reducing the impact of side effects by being prepared for, and dealing with, side effects that can be minimised or eliminated.

This means being aware of the reactions you may experience, such as appetite loss, rashes and insomnia, and having some strategies in place to deal with them: the sooner they are minimised, the easier it will be to continue treatment.

Depression and mental health problems can arise during treatment, especially for people with a history of these.

Ideally, health professionals will work together to deal with this in preparation for treatment, and prescribe anti-depressants, mood stabilisers or other medication if needed. It helps to be physically fit before beginning treatment, as the course can be demanding; this includes losing excess weight, eating a healthy diet and quitting smoking.

Many people are less active during treatment, and it can take time after finishing to regain fitness. It is also useful to set aside time for relaxation and pursuing other interests, so that treatment doesn't become all consuming.

You have to stay focussed and not let treatment consume your thoughts. It's easy for it to take over your life so that everything revolves around hep C and treatment.

### Personal Support

If you live with other people, they may also need to know what's involved in treatment, if only so they can cope with potential mood swings.

It can be especially hard for partners to deal with depression or outbursts directed at them, and it's helpful for them to be able to recognise early signs of depression so that they can be dealt with. Sue Mason helps prepare patients as much as possible by discussing what they may experience. It's good to do this with a support person or partner so they are clued in as well.

Recognising what others can do to help during this time is important; partners and housemates may be willing to do extra chores such as cleaning and shopping. While it is important for friends and partners to support someone going through treatment, it may also be good for them to have some outside support for themselves.

---

Polare Magazine is published quarterly in Australia by The Gender Centre Inc., which is funded by the Department of Family & Community Services under the S.A.A.P. program and supported by the N.S.W. Health Department through the AIDS and Infectious Diseases Branch. Polare provides a forum for discussion and debate on gender issues. Unsolicited contributions are welcome, the editor reserves the right to edit such contributions without notification. Any submission which appears in Polare may be published on our internet site. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, The Gender Centre Inc., the Department of Family & Community Services or the N.S.W. Department of Health.

---

The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.