

# A GUIDE TO: **HEALTHY LIVING WITH HEPATITIS C**

Lucinda K. Porter, RN



**T**he information in this guide is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

*Permission to reprint this document is granted and encouraged with credit to the author and the Hepatitis C Support Project.*

***A publication of the Hepatitis C Support Project***

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Foreword . . . . . 1
- Tips for Living Well with HCV . . . . . 2
- Nutrition . . . . . 3
- Weight Management . . . . . 4
- Food Safety . . . . . 6
- Physical Fitness . . . . . 7
- Sleep . . . . . 8
- Attitude . . . . . 9
- Balance Rest and Activity . . . . . 10
- Laughter and Recreation . . . . . 10
- Memory Improvement. . . . . 11
- Positive Thinking . . . . . 12
- Spirituality, Prayer and Meditation . . . . . 13
- Stress Management. . . . . 13
- Substance Use . . . . . 13
- Support Groups . . . . . 13
- Resources . . . . . 14

- *Foreword*

A medical diagnosis may bring us to our knees for a moment. However, after the shock passes, it may be a turning point – an invitation to live in health rather than in disease. There is a proverb that says that those with a disease live better than those without a disease. Many of us who live with chronic hepatitis C virus infection (HCV) agree with this statement. We live with good health **because** of HCV.

There is treatment for HCV, and now many people are living with the memory of HCV, rather than the actual virus. However, treatment doesn't always eliminate HCV. Some people cannot tolerate the medications, or would rather take their chances with HCV than with the treatment. Lack of insurance or other financial or social reasons may interfere with access to HCV treatment. Perhaps you are thinking about HCV treatment but are not quite ready to begin.

This guide is a starting point. We hope it inspires a life long commitment to health. Health is not an all or nothing matter; it is a process rather than a pursuit. It is a daily renewal of a commitment to care for your body, mind and spirit. It is an investment we make today, in order to make tomorrow a little better than it might otherwise be.

This guide is not medical advice. Talk to your medical provider before making any lifestyle changes. Your provider may offer individualized advice, information and support based on your health profile.

In *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind*, Joan Borysenko writes, "Adversity is the crucible in which the spirit is forged." A similar expression is, "that which does not kill us, makes us stronger." Hepatitis C is an invitation to cherish each day, to live fearlessly and fully. It is a time to live.

Lucinda K. Porter, RN  
Writer, Hepatitis C Support Project and *HCV Advocate*

*"As I see it, every day you do one of two things: build health or produce disease in yourself."  
– Adelle Davis*

## TIPS FOR LIVING WELL WITH HCV

Some of us are information collectors and the more information, the better. Others want the condensed version. If you are a “get to the point” person, here are some tips for living well with HCV:

- Join an HCV support group.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and recreational drugs. If you cannot quit, try to cut back or get some help.
- Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night.
- Keep current with regular medical screenings.
- Be immunized against hepatitis A and B. Make sure all vaccinations are up to date.
- Strive to be as physically active as you can be on a regular basis.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a low fat, high fiber diet. Include fruit, vegetables, and whole grains. Avoid trans-fatty acids and saturated fats.
- Avoid dietary supplements that may harm the liver, such as iron or vitamin A, kava, and valerian; never take large doses of supplements; verify that what you are taking is compatible with everything else you are taking.
- Balance rest and activity.
- Cultivate a positive attitude and practice gratitude.
- Avoid or reduce stress.
- Engage in activities that give you pleasure and make you laugh.
- Choose activities that stimulate your brain.
- Engage your spirit in meaningful ways, such as meditation, a walk in the woods, prayer.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water every day.
- Wear a seatbelt.
- Protect yourself from the sun – use sunscreen.
- Practice safer sex.
- Maintain friendships and social contacts.
- Help others. Volunteer your time.

*“Every patient carries her or his own doctor inside.”  
– Albert Schweitzer*

# NUTRITION

People living with chronic hepatitis C virus infection (HCV) commonly ask, “What should we eat?” Here are guidelines upon which many nutrition experts agree:

- Avoid trans fats. These can be found in margarine, shortening, fast and processed foods. Examine labels for partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, which means trans fat. Check cookie and cracker labels for trans fats.
- Everything passes through the liver. Dietary supplements may harm the liver. Evaluate everything before you take it.
- Strive for a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Some fat is essential, but restrict fat consumption to 30% of daily intake. Butter, cheese, ice cream, whole milk, and red meat are typical sources of saturated fat. Avoid or limit foods using palm and coconut oil. Skip fried foods, especially deep-fried.
- Eat generous amounts of fresh fruit and vegetables. Make colorful choices – produce from each color group targets certain vitamins and minerals. Juice and dried fruits are high in calories and not optimal replacements for fresh fruit.
- Opt for real rather than processed food, such as whole grains. Frozen, canned, and fast food is likely to be packed with salt (sodium), sugar, fat and chemicals. Those who avoid white food tend to eat a high fiber diet.
- Choose plant-based proteins. Beans, nuts, and seeds are protein-sources. When eating animal protein choose fish and poultry rather than red meat.
- Avoid foods with pesticides.
- Select a variety of foods.
- Do not exceed sodium (salt) levels that are recommended for your health condition. Processed foods often have high sodium levels.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily.
- Do not eat more calories than you use, unless you need to gain weight.
- Resist fad diets. Look for a diet that has a record of long-term success.
- Choose a food plan you can live with and maintain.
- Skip deprivation. Deprivation may be endured for short periods, but it usually sabotages the best intentions.
- Be skeptical of wild claims. Beware of products, such as herbs and supplements, that promise weight loss without diet or exercise.

*“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live.”*

*– Jim Rohn*

## WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Weight management is more than how good you look – it is about how good you feel and how long you may live. Obesity is associated with an increased risk in a number of medical conditions including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis, sleep apnea, type 2 diabetes, gall bladder disease and depression.

Overweight individuals are prone to *non-alcoholic fatty liver disease* (NAFLD). NAFLD is a spectrum of fat-related liver conditions, ranging from simple *steatosis* (fatty liver cells) to a more severe form, *non-alcoholic steatohepatitis* (NASH). NAFLD is the most common liver disease in the United States.

People living with HCV may have additional reasons to be concerned about body weight. Obesity may be a negative-predictor for response to HCV therapy. Obesity is a risk factor for cirrhosis-related death and may increase the risk for fibrosis.

If you are overweight, with or without HCV, consider making some changes. Skip any “all or nothing” thinking – even a few pounds may benefit your health. The most effective weight loss programs combine calorie reduction with increased physical activity.

Losing and maintaining weight is a lifelong endeavor. If you can replace bad habits with good ones, eventually this endeavor will not take much effort. Do not try to tackle this whole list. Pick one from the list and try mastering it before going on to another.

- Get sufficient sleep. We tend to eat more when we are tired.
- Eat breakfast every day.
- Weigh yourself regularly and often – either daily or weekly
- Eat more slowly. Put your fork down while you chew.
- Keep a food log of everything you eat.
- Weigh and measure your food.
- Read food labels.
- Do not skip meals or get overly hungry.
- Keep food out of sight.
- Stop eating when 80% full.
- Delay eating impulses for at least 20 minutes. Your mind may tell you that you are hungry, when actually you are not.
- Use a smaller plate.

- If you are a stress eater, learn stress reduction techniques.
- Drink a full glass of water before and during meals.
- Include at least five servings of vegetables and three of fruit daily.
- Do not eat while watching TV.
- Keep low calorie snacks on hand and ready to grab, such as jicama, carrots, low fat yogurt, or fruit.
- Eat only when sitting down.
- Savor what you choose. A few nuts, eaten one at a time, are a reasonable amount to eat, rather than eating handfuls at a time.
- Do not shop on an empty stomach.
- Be honest with yourself. If you find yourself buying a favorite food to have around for the kids, you may be lying to yourself.
- Do not put serving bowls on the table.
- Seek support. Commitments are easier to keep with the aid of friends, family or a support system.
- Reward yourself with something other than food. Reward your effort, not the results.
- Do not deprive yourself. Plan to eat small amounts of your favorite foods, but only occasionally.
- Avoid extreme diets. Restricting daily calories to less than 1,100 is potentially dangerous and should not be done unless under strict medical supervision.

### **When eating out, try the following:**

- Do not arrive overly hungry. Subdue your hunger with a broth-based soup, vegetables, shrimp cocktail, a salad, or fruit.
- Ask the waiter to remove the bread, tortilla chips, etc.
- Choose foods that are steamed, poached, broiled, roasted or baked.
- Avoid foods that are fried, sautéed or in heavy sauces.
- Order salad dressings on the side. Dip your fork in the salad dressing before spearing the salad. Alternatively, dress the salad with lemon or vinegar.
- Share an entrée with someone. If there is too much food, ask your waiter to remove half of it and put it in a doggie bag. Ask the waiter to remove your plate as soon as you are done.
- Have fruit for dessert.



**Note:** Consult with a medical professional before starting a weight loss plan. If you are seriously obese, look for a specialist in the field of bariatrics

Learning how to estimate serving sizes is a useful skill. Here are some tools for visually estimating serving sizes:

- 3 oz of meat, poultry or fish = the size of a deck of cards
- One ounce of cheese = two dominoes
- One pancake = compact disc
- ¼ cup of raisins = a large egg
- One teaspoon of butter = thumb tip
- One cup of dry cereal = a large handful
- One baked potato = a fist
- Two tablespoons of peanut butter = ping pong ball
- One cup of steamed rice = a filled cupcake wrapper
- ½ cup of pasta = one ice cream scoop
- One bagel = a hockey puck

## FOOD SAFETY

In addition to maintaining a nutritional diet, strive to practice safe food habits. Patients with liver disease should avoid raw or undercooked shellfish. Raw or undercooked oysters or clams may carry *Vibrio vulnificus*, bacteria that cause a number of serious clinical conditions. Uncooked shellfish may also harbor hepatitis A.

Certain wild mushrooms contain toxins that can destroy even the healthiest livers. Do not eat wild mushrooms unless you are 100% sure of what you consume.

Food poisoning is a serious problem in our country. Hepatitis A can be a food or water borne virus. Those with hepatitis B and C should be immunized against hepatitis A. (It is also recommended that those with HCV infection receive the hepatitis B vaccine.) For specific guidelines about food hygiene, try the consumer advice icon at 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366) [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

*"Be gentle with yourself."  
- Max Erhmann*

## PHYSICAL FITNESS

Physical fitness is an essential part of health. Exercise is probably the single most effective self-help antidote for fatigue and mild depression. This is hard to fathom, especially if getting out of bed is an ordeal. Like most things, exercise is something that is best practiced in moderation. If you are unaccustomed to exercise, have a complicated medical condition, or are over 50 years old, it is advisable to speak to your medical provider before embarking on this.

If you are ready to take this on, start slowly. Five to fifteen minute intervals, two to three times daily, can really help fend off relentless fatigue. This is especially true if you can practice this in a relaxing environment, such as at a park. Remember that 5 minutes of exercise is better than no exercise. Resist the all or nothing temptation. Also, resist the temptation to over-exercise. Balance is the key.

There are many activities from which to choose. Walking is perfect because it requires no special equipment except comfortable shoes. Biking, swimming, dancing, and gardening can be fun as well as therapeutic. Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, and Pilates are highly regarded as beneficial activities. As you venture into the realm of exercise, include stretching as part of your regimen. Start slowly and increase your activity according to how your body responds. Even if you do not want to, go outside and feel the fresh air on your face. The goal is to find a balance of activity that revitalizes you during the day and promotes sleep at night.

Be sensible about exercise. Remember to drink water, apply sunscreen and avoid injuries. Pain is NOT gain. However, sore muscles may occur. Heat, cold packs, and stretching may provide relief. Remember to consult a doctor for injuries and discuss a back-up fitness plan

➔ **The following recommendations for minimum fitness goals are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):**

- *2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., brisk walking) every week and weight training muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms)*

OR

- *1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., jogging or running) every week and weight training muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms)*

OR

- *walking/jogging An equivalent mix of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity and weight training muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms)*

[www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity)

for common injuries. Avoid exercise when ill.

Physical fitness is more likely to be successful if it fits any budget, is portable, and not dependent on the weather. Water bottles are good hand weights. Put the radio on your favorite oldies station and dance to your heart's content. Take a walk in a park.

Staying fit does not have to be an all or nothing proposition and can fit into the busiest schedules. Some ways to do this include gardening, using the stairs, choosing a parking spot on the outskirts of the lot, getting off the bus before the scheduled stop and walking the rest of the way, window shopping, sweeping the floor, and mowing the lawn. Replace power tools with manual tools. Trade a motorized lawnmower for a nonmotorized one. Walk rather than drive. Do not use the remote control when watching TV. Stretch, do leg exercises or lift light weights while talking on the phone or watching television. Any opportunity to be active helps us to stay in shape.

Here are some suggestions, especially when it is hard to maintain a fitness program:

- Schedule your exercise. Mark it on a calendar. Stick to your schedule.
- Make it regular. This is how good habits are formed.
- Suit up and show up. Some people find the act of putting on sneakers and starting the activity helps overcome mental resistance.
- Find a fitness buddy. We are less likely to cancel out on a friend than we are on ourselves.
- Join a group or class.
- Keep a log. Watch your progress.
- Use the Internet and other motivation tools. (See Resources for more information)

## SLEEP

Inadequate or poor quality of sleep can lead to feelings of daytime tiredness. Make sure you are getting sufficient sleep. The National Sleep Foundation states that the average adult needs seven to nine (7 to 9) hours of sleep per night. If you believe that insufficient sleep is a problem, talk to your doctor. Sleep issues are well-understood and much can be done to improve the quality of sleep.

The following can interfere with a good night's sleep:

- Caffeine – coffee, sodas, tea, chocolate

- Tobacco
- A room that is too hot or too cold
- Light
- Noise
- An uncomfortable bed
- Using alcohol before bedtime
- Being hungry
- Eating a large meal close to bedtime
- A snoring bed partner
- A pet in the bedroom
- TV in the bedroom
- Getting too stirred up before bedtime can make it hard to go to sleep

## ATTITUDE

Try to live on the positive rather than the negative side of life. Optimism is not wishful thinking. If an earthquake is rocking the world, it is foolhardy to act as if you are on steady ground. The wise thing is to protect yourself and others, and to try to minimize the damage. Once the shaking stops, evaluate the damage and make a recovery plan. The optimist looks at what is left and plans around this. The pessimist looks only at what is gone and in doing so, lives in the loss and pain.

### Tips for Developing a Healthy Attitude:

- Be honest and realistic. Do not build your attitude on thinking things are worse than they are or better than they are.
- Make sure you know the truth. Get accurate information about HCV. Some people think that HCV is an automatic death sentence. This is not true. The majority will die with HCV, not of HCV.
- Stay in the present. Don't make things worse by imagining a future with pain, disability or loss.

### ➔ *Some tips that promote sleep*

- Make 8 hours of sleep a regular habit. Sleeping less during the week and trying to catch up on the weekend doesn't work.
- Try to go to bed at the same time every night.
- Wear ear plugs if noise interferes with your sleep.
- If you have a clock that is always lit up, turn it so you can't see the time.
- Exercise every day.
- Turn off your TV and computer an hour or two before bedtime.
- If you nap, keep it short and early in the day.
- Try reading before bedtime, but use a low-watt bulb.
- Do not eat a few hours before bedtime but don't go to bed hungry. If you eat something, choose food that is light and nutritious. Avoid spicy or greasy food.
- Take a hot bath before retiring.
- If you feel you need to worry, tell yourself that you will only worry in the daytime. Make your bedroom a worry-free zone. Learn relaxation techniques to reduce stress and worrying.
- Listen to relaxation tapes before retiring.
- Do not lay awake in bed for more than 20 to 30 minutes. Get up, do something boring for a little while, and then go back to bed.
- Your bed is for sleep and sex. If you are not doing either of these, stay out of bed.

- Accept your situation, but don't overly identify with it. HCV may be a part of your life, but that doesn't mean it should control your life.
- Maintain your perspective. Focus your attention on something that brings peace, joy, laughter and meaning.
- Watch your words. If you hear yourself talking negatively, substitute positive phrases. Say, "I will find a way to live with HCV" rather than "HCV is ruining my life."
- Try to relax. Tell yourself that difficult moments will pass.
- Visualize health, not illness. Visualization is a powerful tool for self-transformation.
- Practice gratitude. Make it a habit to find things for which you are grateful.
- Learn what you can control and what you cannot. There are things you cannot control, such as the fact that you have HCV. However, there are things you can control, such as your attitude and what you say to yourself about having HCV.
- Learn from HCV. Ask yourself what HCV can teach you about living.
- Get support. Being with others who are dealing with the same issues can bring encouragement and hope. See if there is an HCV support group in your area.
- Help others. When it comes to stepping outside of ourselves, probably nothing works as well as reaching out to others who are also struggling.

## BALANCE REST AND ACTIVITY

Schedule a daily rest period. Rest is like fuel for the body. Just as you plan to put fuel in your car, do the same for your body. Consider resting as a preventative measure and try to rest before you get too fatigued. Those times you feel more energetic, resist the temptation to skip a rest break. This will only lead to increased inefficiency or fatigue later. Balance is the key. Pace yourself, take breaks, plan ahead, and delegate. Ask for help. Create short cuts. Organize your work areas so you can work more efficiently. Break large tasks into smaller ones, and do what you can, as you are able.

## LAUGHTER AND RECREATION

Finding pleasurable activities that you can participate in may improve your mood and prevent thoughts and feelings that can contribute to depression. Try to pick at least one pleasurable activity and find the time to do it often. It is also worth promoting something

that can be infectious: laughter. Having HCV can be painful and burdensome – if we let it. Laughter is not a cure, but it can lighten the load. Humor has no side effects except, perhaps, a few laughs. It is the one contagious condition that feels good and does not need a doctor's order. Prescribe it for yourself today.

## MEMORY IMPROVEMENT

People living with hepatitis C virus infection (HCV) sometimes complain of memory problems. Memory loss, especially short-term memory, occurs commonly as we age.

Do not panic if you become forgetful. Panic will only make things worse. It is normal to forget how to add, but abnormal to be confused about the concept of numbers. It is all right to forget where you put your keys; forgetting what your keys do is cause for concern. Many treatable conditions can cause cognitive impairment, so it is important to obtain a good medical evaluation before jumping to conclusions. Hearing loss, sleep problems, thyroid disease, psychiatric disorders, stress, vitamin deficiency, alcohol, and drugs are just a few factors that can affect our ability to think, communicate, and function effectively. Always talk to your medical provider about changes in your health.

Just because memory decline is natural does not mean we can't help slow down the process. The brain is like a muscle in that if you do not use it you lose it. An active brain can grow new cells and work more effectively. Here are some ways to keep your brain healthy:

- Read more or listen to audio books.
- Do puzzles and brainteasers.
- Learn new things, particularly drawing or painting.
- Go to lectures, plays, museums, or concerts.
- Cut down or eliminate watching TV.
- Take up a musical instrument.
- Maintain social and family connections.
- Study a new language.
- Find a hobby.
- Play games.
- Learn to juggle.

*"Man needs difficulties; they are necessary for health."*

*– Carl Jung*

- Take adult education classes.
- Learn to dance.
- Breathe. Oxygen is essential to our brains.
- Deliberately shake up your routine. Rearrange your furniture, drive a different route to familiar places, or wear your watch on your other wrist.

As for forgetfulness, there are techniques that can be used to help us improve our memory. Libraries usually have books on memory improvement. A few suggestions:

- Organize yourself.
- Create habits and routines.
- Write things down and keep your lists in the same place.
- Do one task at a time, rather than multi-tasking.
- Pay attention to what you want to remember.
- Visualize what you want to recall.
- Use repetition to fasten something into your memory bank.
- When you learn a name, repeat it aloud a few times.
- To remember long lists, create a story or connections between items.
- Make associations between things. For instance, if you meet someone named Robin, picture a bird.
- Use memory devices, also called mnemonics, to aid memory.

## POSITIVE THINKING

Positive thinking is a learned skill. Performed on a regular basis, positive thinking can replace negative thinking. Positive thinking can be a useful tool in overcoming inertia. Start slowly. Pick a negative phrase or two and turn it into a positive message. For instance, if you find yourself thinking you will never get well, try saying to yourself, "This too shall pass." Alternatively, if you are saying to yourself, "I am never going to learn how to do such-and-such," substitute, "I am a work in progress" or "Even a Stradivarius has to be retuned constantly." Practice positive thinking even if you do not believe it. Over time, positive thinking can become a habit, and can help improve many aspects of your health.

*"Health is not valued till sickness comes."*

*– Thomas Fuller*

## **SPIRITUALITY: PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

Health includes body, mind, and spirit. Patients who live with chronic disease have found it helpful to develop some sort of spiritual practice to help them cope with disease. Prayer is often associated with religion or a set of beliefs. Meditation is a tool to help quiet the mind while promoting awareness and a sense of well-being. Meditation is sometimes described as the practice of mindfulness or living in the present.

## **STRESS MANAGEMENT**

Too much stress can worsen the symptoms of depression and takes its toll on one's health. Avoiding unnecessary stress is easier said than done. There are many types of stress management techniques. Yoga, meditation, and stress management classes are a few examples. Some employers, HMOs, and adult education services offer stress management classes.

## **SUBSTANCE USE**

Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs can cause or worsen liver disease, fatigue, depression and anxiety. Alcohol is a depressant and is incompatible with HCV. The psychological and physical impact of recreational drug use is well-documented. Tobacco is a stimulant and can cause increased anxiety. Although quitting the use of these substances can be difficult, it can be done. There is help available for all sorts of substance cessation. Ask your medical provider for available resources in your community.

## **SUPPORT GROUPS**

Support groups are treasure chests for hepatitis C patients. A good support group provides information, resources and support. Patients share their experiences, talk about their favorite doctors, discuss how they handle medication side effects, and provide tips on living with HCV. Most patients find it valuable to be with others who share the same experiences as they do, where they can be among others without having to explain themselves.

## RESOURCES

**Note: HCSP and the authors do not endorse the products or advertising on any of these websites.**

For more information, look at the “Healthy Living with HCV” series in the *Healthwise* columns of *The HCV Advocate* newsletter, as well as at HCSP’s guides and fact sheets on the HCV Advocate website [www.hcvadvocate.org](http://www.hcvadvocate.org)

- **Aetna Intellihealth** [www.intelihealth.com](http://www.intelihealth.com) Click on the *Healthy Lifestyle* section.
- **American Heart Association** [www.heart.org/HEARTORG](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG) See *Getting Healthy* section.
- **The American Institute of Stress** [www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org)
- **Calories Per Hour** [www.caloriesperhour.com](http://www.caloriesperhour.com) Start here and you may find everything you need to develop a good weight loss strategy.
- **Centers for Disease Control** [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) Health and disease information; vaccine recommendations; information about HCV.
- **Cyberdiet** [www.cyberdiet.com](http://www.cyberdiet.com)
- **Dietwatch** [www.dietwatch.com](http://www.dietwatch.com) This commercial website maintains the Cyberdiet website. There is ample free information worth looking into, particularly about the emotional aspect of overeating.
- **Drugs.com** [www.drugs.com/drug\\_interactions.html](http://www.drugs.com/drug_interactions.html) Provides an interactive tool to check for potential interactions between supplements and dugs.
- **Family Doctor** [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org) Look at the *Healthy Living* section.
- **Gratefulness.org** [www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org)
- **Harvard School of Public Health** [www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/index.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/index.html) Offers an alternative food pyramid, nutrition, healthy lifestyle information.
- **HCV Advocate** [www.hcvadvocate.org](http://www.hcvadvocate.org) Click on “Support Groups” on the right side of page to find a group near you.
- **Hepatitis Comics** [www.hepatitiscomics.blogspot.com](http://www.hepatitiscomics.blogspot.com) For those looking for links to laughter.

*“Health is not simply the absence of sickness.”*

*– Hannah Green*

- **The Institute of Lifestyle Medicine** [www.instituteoflifestylemedicine.org](http://www.instituteoflifestylemedicine.org)
- **Mayo Clinic** [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) Check out the *Healthy Lifestyle* section
- **Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center** [www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/11570.cfm](http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/11570.cfm) Information about herbs and other dietary supplements.
- **Merck** [www.mercksource.com](http://www.mercksource.com) Although owned by a pharmaceutical company, there is no advertising and good information. Free sign-up is required in order to access some of the information, such as the Body Mass Index Calculator.
- **National Institute on Drug Abuse** [www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)
- **The National Sleep Foundation** [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)
- **The National Weight Control Registry** [www.nwcr.ws](http://www.nwcr.ws) A national database of over 5000 people who have lost 30 or more pounds and kept it off for at least one year.
- **Nutrition.gov** [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov) A link to interactive tools and other sources of information, including [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).
- **Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion** [www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov)
- **Oldways** [www.oldwayspt.org](http://www.oldwayspt.org) This organization promotes itself as a food issue think tank. Offers alternative pyramids for a variety of diets, including Mediterranean, Latin, Asian, and vegetarian.
- **Prevention Magazine** [www.prevention.com](http://www.prevention.com) This is an excellent magazine with a helpful website if you ignore the advertising.
- **ShapeUp** [www.shapeup.org](http://www.shapeup.org) This nonprofit organization offers excellent practical information.
- **SmokeFree.gov** [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- **The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports** [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)
- **PrimusWeb.com** [www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner](http://www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner) Great fitness website.
- **United States Department of Health and Human Services** [www.smallstep.gov](http://www.smallstep.gov) Government-sponsored fitness motivation website.
- **World Wide Online Meditation Center** [www.meditationcenter.com](http://www.meditationcenter.com)
- **Zen** [www.do-not-zzz.com](http://www.do-not-zzz.com)

*"Never give up. Keep your thoughts and your mind always on the goal."  
– Tom Bradley*

# A GUIDE TO: **HEALTHY LIVING WITH HEPATITIS C**

Lucinda K. Porter, RN



Alan Franciscus  
Executive Director  
Editor-in-Chief, HCSP  
Publications

Author  
Lucinda K. Porter, RN

Managing Editor, Webmaster  
C.D. Mazoff, PhD

Contact Information  
Hepatitis C Support Project  
PO Box 427037  
San Francisco, CA 94142-7037  
alanfranciscus@hcvadvocate.org

*The information in this guide is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.*

Version 3.0, June 2010  
© 2010 Hepatitis C Support Project