Introduction

This guide is a very brief overview of hepatitis C treatment. It is meant to help you understand the latest drugs that are used to treat hepatitis C if you have genotype 4. It is intended as an aid to help you work with your doctor and nurse. One of the most important things you can do is to learn as much as possible about hepatitis C as you can. This will help you make important decisions that are right for you.

The drugs can cure most people with hepatitis C—in fact, these drugs can cure up to 100% of people (up to 10 of 10). These drugs are called direct-acting antivirals. They are called this because they work to stop the hepatitis C virus from making more copies of itself. Some people may have to take another drug called ribavirin because their hepatitis C is a little harder to cure.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

- Definitions of commonly used terms
- The best drugs to treat hepatitis C—genotype 4
- How long treatment lasts
- The most common side effects of the drugs
- Resources

It is important to know that even though the hepatitis C drugs can cure up to 100% people that not everyone is going to be cured. However, the chances of being cured have never been better.

I hope this guide gives you information that will make the decision a little easier. If there is any additional information that would help to improve this guide, please email me at alanfranciscus@hcvadvocate.org

—Alan
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CURE
At the end of treatment a person who no longer has the condition or disease. In hepatitis C it means 12 weeks from the end of treatment the hepatitis C virus is no longer found in the blood. It is also called sustained virological response (SVR).

DIRECT-ACTING ANTIVIRALS
Medications that directly stop the hepatitis C virus from making more copies of itself.

GENOTYPE
Are strains of hepatitis C. There are 7 genotypes numbered 1 through 7. Genotype 4 is one of the least common genotypes in the world and the United States. Genotype information is important for HCV treatment decisions and for how long to take the medications.

HARVONI
A combination of two drugs combined into one pill taken once-a-day.

HCV
The hepatitis C virus (HCV). It is a virus that is spread by blood-to-blood contact.

RIBAVIRIN
A medication that may be combined with some HCV medications.
Note: Ribavirin can cause birth defects. Pregnancy must be avoided if ribavirin is part of treatment. Talk to a doctor or nurse about effective birth control.

SIDE EFFECTS
A condition that is caused by the use of drugs (medications).

TECHNIVIE
A combination of several drugs taken with and without ribavirin.

ZEPATIER
A combination of two drugs combined into one pill taken once-a-day. It is taken with and without ribavirin.
HARVONI is a combination of two drugs combined into one pill. It is taken once-a-day. It is approved to treat genotype 4. HARVONI is taken for 12 weeks. Some people will also have to take it with ribavirin.

The cure rate is more 90% (more than 9 out 10 people) who take the pills. Talk to your doctor or nurse about the treatment and if it is right for you.

The most common side effects from HARVONI are:

- Fatigue (feeling tired)
- Headache
- Feeling weak

Hepatitis C drugs are expensive. Gilead who makes HARVONI has programs that may be able to help with the cost of the drugs. Gilead also has other services that may help. Contact Gilead at: MySupportPath.com or call 1-855-769-7284.
TECHNIVIE is a combination of pills that comes in a packet. It is approved to treat genotype 4. Some people will also have to take it with ribavirin. Ribavirin is taken twice a day with food.

TECHNIVIE is taken for 12 weeks.

The cure rate is up to 100% (up to 10 out of 10) people who take the pills are cured.

The most common side effects of TECHNIVIE are:

☑ Physical weakness/lack of energy
☑ Fatigue (feeling tired)
☑ Nausea (feeling sick to the stomach)
☑ Insomnia (problems falling asleep and staying asleep)
☑ Itching

The most common side effects of TECHNIVIE with ribavirin are:

☑ Physical weakness/lack of energy
☑ Fatigue (feeling tired)
☑ Nausea (feeling sick to the stomach)
☑ Insomnia (problems with sleeping)
☑ Skin problems

Note: in general ribavirin increases the side effects of TECHNIVIE.

CAUTION!

TECHNIVIE should not be taken with certain drugs a doctor prescribes, over-the-counter drugs bought at a market or drug store, herbs or any other drugs. Be sure to tell your doctor or nurse any of these you are taking.

HCV drugs are expensive. AbbVie who make TECHNIVIE has programs that may help with the cost of medicines. AbbVie also has other programs that may help you. Contact AbbVie at: https://www.viekira.com/ or call 1-844-484-3547.
ZEPATIER is a combination of pills that is combined into one pill taken once-a-day. It is approved to treat genotype 4. Some people will also have to take it with ribavirin.

Ribavirin is taken twice a day with food.

ZEPATIER is taken for 12 or 16 weeks.

The cure rate is up to 100% (up to 10 out of 10 people) who take the pills are cured.

The most common side effects of ZEPATIER are:
✓ Fatigue (feeling tired)
✓ Headache
✓ Nausea (feeling sick to the stomach)
✓ Insomnia (sleep problems)
✓ Diarrhea

The most common side effects of ZEPATIER and ribavirin are:
✓ Anemia (low red blood cells)
✓ Headache
✓ Fatigue
✓ Shortness of breath
✓ Rash or itching
✓ Feeling irritable
✓ Stomach pain
✓ Depression
✓ Joint pain

CAUTION!

ZEPATIER should not be taken with certain drugs a doctor prescribes, some over-the-counter drugs, herbs, and any other drugs. Be sure to tell your doctor or nurse of any of these you are taking.

HCV medications are expensive. Merck has programs that may be able to help with some of the costs. They also have other services to help you with getting through treatment. Contact Merck at: http://www.merckaccessprogram-zepatier.com/ or 866-251-6013
Suggested Reading

A Guide to Understanding Hepatitis C 2016
By Alan Franciscus

Hepatitis C Treatment One Step at a Time.
By Lucinda K. Porter, RN.
Demos Health.

Resources

For more information about HCV, contact the following organizations

- National Institutes of Health
  http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/liver-disease/hepatitis-c/Pages/ez.aspx

- Centers for Disease Control - Hepatitis C
  http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HCV/PDFs/HepCGeneralFactSheet.pdf

- National HCV Helpline
  877-HELP-4-HEP (877-435-7443)

Visit the HCV Advocate Website for information about hepatitis C including:

- HCV Advocate Website: www.hcvadvocate.org for information about hepatitis C

- Newly Diagnosed: Information and a printable brochure to help newly diagnosed patients
  http://hcvadvocate.org/newly-diagnosed/

- Treatment Issues: Treatment-related information: fact sheets about approved medications, side effects, and more
  http://hcvadvocate.org/treatment/

- Fact Sheets: This lists all of our fact sheets including our Easy C Facts, HCSP Fact Sheets, FAQ, Guides, Coinfection Facts, Chinese Easy C’s, and Tattoos
  http://hcvadvocate.org/publications/fact-sheets/

- Resources: Disability Benefits, Glossaries (Medical & Herbal), Helpful links including support groups
  http://hcvadvocate.org/resources/

- Espanol: Fact Sheets in Spanish
  http://hcvadvocate.org/spanish/

- A Guide to Understanding Hepatitis C 2016. Includes information about a patient assistance programs

- Newsletter: Monthly and Mid-monthly editions
  http://hcvadvocate.org/publications/newsletter/