

### Dry, Itchy Skin and Mild Rash

- Take short, warm (not hot) baths or showers. Use a moisturizing soap (ie, Dove® or Aveeno®).
- Use unscented skin lotions. Eucerin®, Curel®, and LacHydrin® creams are very helpful.
- Be sure to use sunscreen (at least SPF 15), as patients on medication are more prone to burning.
- Try over-the-counter hydrocortisone creams or Benadryl® spray.
- If itching persists, call the clinic for further advice and/or prescription medications.

### Skin Irritation at the Injection Site

- Painless, red irritation of the skin at the site of the injection is common.
- This resolves on its own within 7-10 days. To minimize this reaction, remember to rotate the site of your injections.

### Chest Pain

- Chest pain is an uncommon side effect of the medication that should be reported immediately to the clinic. Proceed to the nearest emergency room if necessary.

### Insomnia (inability to sleep)

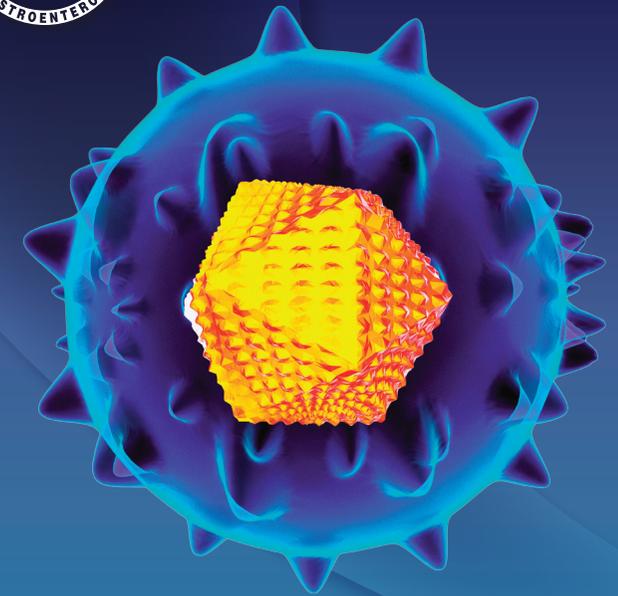
- The medicines for hepatitis C can sometimes interfere with your normal sleep cycle. Getting a good night's rest will help with some of the flu like symptoms. If you have trouble sleeping, call your clinic for suggestions/medications.



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## Tips to Lessen Common Side Effects of HCV Therapy

From the American College of Gastroenterology

## Flu-like Symptoms

(fever, chills, headaches, fatigue, muscle aches)

- One hour before your injection, take 2 regular strength acetaminophen (Tylenol® or generic), or 2 ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, or generic). You may repeat every 4-6 hours after your injection as needed.
- Do not take more than 2000 mg of acetaminophen in 24 hour period.
- Do not take more than 1600 mg of ibuprofen in 24 hour period.
- \*If you take both acetaminophen and ibuprofen in the same 24 hour period, do not take more than half the maximum daily dose listed above for each product.\*
- Increase your daily intake of fluids (non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated). We recommend 8–10 glasses (8 oz.) of water or other clear beverages each day.
- Take pegylated interferon injections in the evening or at bedtime to sleep through most of the flu-like symptoms.

## Depression & Irritability

(signs of depression include feelings of deep and constant sadness, hopelessness, crying, major changes in mood, loss of interest in things you enjoy, trouble sleeping/concentrating)

- Avoid stressful situations if possible, and learn relaxation techniques.
- Include light exercise in your daily routine.
- Become a volunteer for someone less fortunate than yourself.
- Seek professional help. Be sure to notify the clinic if these feelings persist, there may be medications available by prescription to help you.
- If you experience thoughts of harming or killing yourself or others, call the clinic immediately!

## Mild Hair Thinning

- Shorter hairstyles may reduce hair loss.
- Don't wash your hair excessively. If you wash your hair daily, try switching to every other day.
- Avoid using blow dryers and chemical treatments on your hair.
- Hair growth will return after treatment is discontinued.

## Loss of Appetite

(10-15 lb. weight loss is common)

- Eat frequent small meals throughout the day, even if you aren't hungry. "Grazing" rather than 3 large meals is often helpful.
- A light walk or short exercise before meals can increase appetite and decrease nausea.
- Try protein powder shakes, or dietary supplements (Ensure®, Boost®, Sustacal®, Slim Fast®) in addition to regular meals.
- Eliminate any metallic taste in your mouth by brushing regularly. Some people have found that eating a small amount of dark chocolate, yogurt, or honey before a meal helps to reduce the metallic taste. Fresh lemon in ice water is also helpful.

## Nausea, Vomiting, and Diarrhea

- Drink plenty of fluids (non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated).
- Taking your ribavirin with food may reduce nausea.
- For occasional diarrhea, switch to bland foods such as bananas, rice, applesauce, and dry toast or crackers until diarrhea resolves. Then gradually return to a normal diet.
- Take over-the-counter medications for nausea and diarrhea. If these do not help, call the clinic for prescription medications.
- Any vomiting or diarrhea lasting more than 3 days should be reported to the clinic.

