What You Should Know About HIV and Hepatitis

February 27, 2012 By Laura Whitehorn

Two new protease inhibitors (PIs) for hep C are showing promise in people who also have HIV. Some 70 percent of people with both HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) had undetectable HCV viral loads after 24 weeks of treatment with either Incivek (telaprevir) or Victrelis (boceprevir) plus pegylated interferon and ribavirin. The study, looking at how people with HIV and hep C do when Incivek or Victrelis is added to the standard hep C regimen, is ongoing.

Looking forward to continued good reports on the drugs, experts have issued guidelines on the use of HCV PIs in people living with HIV. (Incivek and Victrelis can be prescribed off-label for people living with both viruses before the drugs get FDA approval for coinfection, but interaction with HIV regimens must be considered.)

Chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) coinfection raises the risk of AIDS-related illness or death in people living with HIV—nearly double, in fact. So get tested for hep B, and if you don't have it, get vaccinated.

If you do have hep B, be sure to include in your HIV regimen a med that's active against both HIV and HBV—such as Epivir (lamivudine), Emtriva (emtricitabine), Viread (tenofovir) or Truvada (tenofovir/emtricitabine).

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