

"Hey friends,

My name is Carina Guzman. I have been a fibro fighter since 2015. Throughout my journey I have faced many difficulties but the one thing that always makes me happy is helping and being a friend to everyone. I hope this advice helps you throughout your healing process. Please feel free to submit advice to share with out fellow fibro fighters.."

-Carina

Pain management

- Lidocaine patches- These can either be prescribed by your doctor, found at your local drug store, or purchased on Amazon.com. These patches should not be placed on or too near the incision site but offer a great amount of pain relief.
- Heating patches- Placing heating patches anywhere on your back are a great pill-free alternative to relieve pain.
- Peppermint essential oil- Because essential oils serve many purposes before purchasing please ensure it's a brand that is safe to apply on the skin. If you have sensitive skin I would suggest diluting the oil with water, baby oil, or unscented lotion. Apply two drops behind the ears to relieve headaches and pain in the shoulders and upper back.

- Medical Waistband- Found at local drug stores and Amazon.com these bands are best after surgery. As most of us know movement after a liver resection is very painful I have found wearing this band helps me with several things. I feel protected, this also helps with posture, and the tightness can be adjusted to your level of comfort to help relieve pain near the incision site.
- I would suggest using the Lidocaine/patches and then putting on the waistband. This has helped tremendously with sleeping and comfort.

- Coughing and sneezing are also extremely harsh and painful after a liver resection, but coughing is an important part of our recovery because it helps bring up mucus and regulate breathing in our lungs. Exposing yourself to steam and Vick's vapor rub help your lungs breathe easier and do a great job at breaking up the mucus inside. Place a pillow tightly around your abdominal area to make coughing any infectious mucus less painful.

Scheduling Appointments

- Whether your journey has just started or not start collecting your own copies of ALL medical documents. This includes radiology, medications, surgeries, and a list of all your different doctors. I would suggest a three-ring binder with different tabs, having your medical history on your own file is important for many reasons.

If you meet other doctors for different opinions on your treatment this makes it easier for them and yourself. If you choose to contribute information to the Fibrolamellar Cancer Foundation you can access and answer any questions with ease.

● CT/ MRI scans-

Always schedule your follow-up scans early Monday-Wednesday morning I have found anytime later in the week will most likely mean waiting the entire weekend and even the following Monday for my results. Scan-anxiety is real so the less you can wait the better.

Prepack a small lunch to eat after your scans, contrast dye comes with many side effects but the more fluids and light foods you eat the faster the dye will leave your system. I prefer water, crackers, and natural fruit juices because these are easy on my stomach but hydrate and fill me with nutrients.

POSITIVITY

Every appointment brings a wave of anxiety and worry always keep in mind THIS IS OK it's a natural process so find your favorite quote, my personal favorite is "what's coming will come and we'll meet it when it does" -Hagrid from Harry Potter.

Play your favorite songs as loud as you want before and make sure you go with people you love. It's hard to feel like you're not in control but the one thing you have full control over is your mind, heart, and soul. Take care of those things as much as you take care of yourself on the outside. Take a deep breath, remind yourself you ARE in control and you have a community and loved ones who are in your corner at all times.

Keep the fight going. Keep pushing. Never give up.

