



MAILBAG

Q: My fiancé had recently taken a sweat test to test for Cystic Fibrosis. He is almost 30 years old. The doctor said that the results came back positive, and to go to a better hospital such as UIC or LOYOLA in Chicago, Illinois to get a second opinion. If in fact he is diagnosed (he is also a smoker) how will his prognosis differ from a patient dealing with Cystic Fibrosis at a younger age? Chantix was prescribed, to allow him to quit smoking, but can the smoking ultimately make the symptoms worse if in fact he does have the disease? Does my fiancé have a better chance of survival since he was (maybe) diagnosed at such a late age?

-Lemonia V., USA

A: The fact that your fiancé started to manifest lung symptoms like chronic bronchitis which sometimes does not differ from a smoker's bronchitis, indicates that he has a so-called "mild form" of CF. A very late diagnosis might be better than an early diagnosis of a very young child. Due to genetic combinations, the CF forms that appear very early in life are often bound to be much more severe than those forms which appear later in life. To quit smoking is imperative, because smoking enhances all the bad symptoms of the CF-induced bronchitis. Smoking, as you know, is bad for everybody, but for your fiancé it is particularly dangerous.

Once the diagnosis has been done, one *must* follow the therapies in order to eliminate the purulent secretions from the lungs. In fact these purulent secretions have revealed themselves now and might seriously damage the lungs of your fiancé.

To get a second opinion is always a good procedure. What is most important to understand, however, is that the sooner he will be capable to interpret his own symptoms and to accept the daily therapies that the CF Centers will advise him to do, the better his life quality will be. The survival statistics tell us that everything depends on the therapies: the diagnosis which will make him proceed to the therapies is the best chance for your fiancé to improve quality and duration of life!

Professional information in the first phase of diagnosis and therapies is very important and should not exclude the partner. I wish all the best for you and your fiancé !

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