

Nutrition in post-transplant care: Glória's Journey

WORLD
LIVER
DAY



*This is a personal testimonial shared by Glória, a 28-year-old lawyer and singer from Brazil, in honor of **World Liver Day**.*

Seven months after her liver transplant at Hospital das Clínicas of the Faculty of Medicine of USP (HCFMUSP), she reflects on the challenges, lessons, and hope found through her recovery.



Glória Freitas
(Brazil)



When did your health journey begin, and how did you finally receive your diagnosis?

I got sick in May 2023, but I only got a diagnosis at the end of March 2024, which means it took me almost a year to find out that **I had a rare liver syndrome, Budd Chiari Syndrome**. However, before this diagnosis, there were several symptoms: leishmaniasis, metastatic cancer in the peritoneum, fat in the liver.

What early symptoms did you experience before getting diagnosed?

The first was a regretful **outbreak and unprecedented weight gain**, then I discovered that I had ascites and portal hypertension and I also became anemic.

Looking back, how important do you think early detection was in your recovery journey?

Wow, it makes all the difference! If I had the chance to know sooner, maybe I would have avoided the transplant! I wouldn't have gone through what I went through in hospitals and ICUs.

What advice would you give to other people about listening to their bodies or getting regular checkups?

Please take care of yourself! **Get regular checkups**, these checkups make all the difference in preventing diseases.

What were some of the hardest parts of your recovery after the transplant?

Limited mobility, not being able to cook, walk or do physical activity. Then came the anxiety of not being able to do anything but having to wait for my body to recover.

Was diet an important part of your healing process?

Absolutely! **Avoiding fatty and processed foods helps your body to reduce inflammation from the surgery and to heal better and faster.** I did very well in this area, my healing was great! I eat lots of **fruits and vegetables, brothy foods and foods with fiber.**



Did your doctors or nutritionists recommend any specific dietary guidelines?

After the transplant, it is vital to **know where your food comes from!** I avoid eating food cooked outside the home or fast food as much as possible, because we don't know if it has been properly sanitized! So everything I eat needs to be sanitized according to medical guidelines.



Were there any surprising foods you had to cut out or eat more of?



I have to eliminate and **avoid all processed products, foods with excess sodium, and excess sugar** for a while.

It is forbidden to eat raw or undercooked foods to avoid cytomegalovirus, such as meat, chicken, hosomakis, sashimi, etc.

It is also not advisable to eat oysters, as they reduce the effect of immunosuppressants, which can lead to infection of the transplanted organ.

How has nutrition supported your strength and recovery?

My diet has improved the anemia I had before the transplant, **it has given me more energy**, it has improved the health of my hair, nails and skin, and especially my kidneys!

What would you like to say to others living with liver disease on World Liver Day?



If you are going through this difficult time, I hope you know that it will pass! And when it does, don't forget your fight, because **our liver is our filter, our detox! So take good care of it so it can take care of you!**