



Hello and welcome to the Renal Diet Headquarters podcast, with your host Mathea Ford, CEO of Renal Diet Headquarters. This is our weekly talk about how you can succeed with a kidney diet, brought to you by renaldietHQ.com, a website whose mission is to be the most valued resource on kidney disease that people can use to improve their health.

This week we are talking about being heart healthy and starting off the heart healthy month on Renal Diet Headquarters.

This episode is being published on February 5th, 2014, and I am glad to be here with you.

You can find information and links that I speak about in this episode at www.renaldietHQ.com/007 on our website. This is episode number seven. You can also find us on iTunes and Stitcher radio and I will put the link in the show notes for you to find and subscribe. So if you go back to the blog you will be able to find those. Also any comments will be appreciated and you can send them to podcast@renaldietHQ.com.

On a little bit of a personal note, we just had the Super Bowl in the United States, and if you would like to, I would love to hear what your favorite commercial was, because I was cheering for the Bronco's and they lost so I would rather hear about your favorite commercial on the Super Bowl.

So, my favorite was the Tostitos commercial where the guy gets into the box like it is a time machine and the little kid tells him it's a time machine and he gets out and it's the old man and he thinks he has gone forward in time. I thought that was absolutely hilarious. My family also liked the Heinz ketchup commercial, and if you have not seen that one I will let you see it yourself, but it is kinda funny. I hope you found something to enjoy about that. If you are a Seahawks fan, congratulations.

So, with all that said, I wanted to go ahead and get into the information in this podcast that we want to talk about. This month we have designated as our heart healthy month and February is typically heart health month, so it is easy to make sure that is what we are talking about. What I want you to know, is that even with kidney failure, you are more likely to die from heart problems than you are from a kidney related problem. I think that is very important for people with kidney disease to realize that their heart health is a very significant part of their overall health.

I want to tell you a couple of, two different stories about heart health that we experienced as a family right before Christmas. We lost a family friend, very suddenly, a 29 year old young man who was way too young; he just had a sudden heart attack and could not recover. It was very catastrophic and very obviously painful to his family and those of us who knew him.

Also, right before Christmas, probably a week before Christmas, my mom started feeling, and my mom is in her 60's, my mom started feeling a funny pain in her left arm and a little bit of pressure on her chest. My mom does deal with kidney problems, but she also has had a heart attack and has had open heart surgery before, so she called my older sister and was talking to her about how she was feeling and she continued to feel worse. She ended up calling the ambulance, and when they got there; the funny part about it is, my mom, while she is waiting for the ambulance, then calls me on the phone to tell me at work that she is getting ready to go to the hospital because the ambulance is called, thinking that she will tell me I guess, and I would be calm about it or something, so that was interesting.

So, my mom calls the ambulance, they get there and they give her two baby aspirins, that you chew up, and I'm sure we have all seen that, you know aspirin can be helpful or you may take aspirins as part of your daily regimen, but it was interesting. And so they gave her those, they took her to the hospital, and took her in the ER, they did all they tests and they found out she did indeed have a heart attack. So what they did that evening, they were able to, like about 6 o'clock that night, do a cardiac cath, where they go in through your leg and go up to into your heart and they opened up a couple arteries, she had two arteries that were blocked, and I believe one was about 80% and the other was 90 to 100% blocked and they could see that, the doctor was able to go in and my mom was actually conscious for part of the cardiac cath, and she could hear them talking and everything. But she was able to go to her room that evening, they removed the dressing on her leg and she was doing fine that evening. She felt really good. She was able to walk out of the hospital just a couple days later. I think that that is a huge tribute to her paying attention to how her body felt, how it was different then what she was use to feeling, what was normal, and how she went ahead reacted and didn't kind of go, oh, it is no big deal, or thankfully she didn't try to drive herself to the hospital, because it was quite a distance away. So, that is a story with kind of a happy ending.

So I want you to think about the fact, how we focus so much on kidneys, and they are very important, and you have to eat right and a lot of the things that you do to eat right involve kidneys, it is the same thing you would do for your heart, and so, that is not a whole lot you have to change, but I just want to encourage you strongly to pay attention to how you feel. And I wanted to go over, with you in this podcast, I think it is an excellent way to start the month, is to start out talking about the symptoms of a heart attack in women and men.

The symptoms most people know of a stroke are some loss of ability to speak, some slurring, some loss of motion in your hands. So, if you have that happen you certainly should call the emergency, but a lot of people don't realize the symptoms of the heart attack. So, men's symptoms are different then women, I will talk about men first. Men's are typically like a heaviness or a pain in the arm, chest or jaw, like right below your, it is called your breast bone, your sternum, right there in the middle. Feeling like heartburn, you can feel like you have got a lot of acid coming back up in your throat, but feeling like

heartburn with the heaviness. Discomfort, that kind of goes from the throat, arm, jaw or back. So it is just generally kind of, not quite feeling right. Shortness of breath, not being able to breathe, feeling that heaviness on your chest, weakness or feeling very anxious, anxiety. Feeling like your heart is beating out of your chest is another symptom, and possible breaking out in a cold sweat. Your symptoms will stay for a long period of time, so it's not something like, oh, I broke out in a cold sweat and I am fine, maybe I had a heart attack. No, this will happen repeatedly and it will feel worse the longer that you feel them. And you certainly should react as soon as possible, as soon as you realize that something is going wrong. Whether you know what it is or not, I don't recommend you try to self-diagnose.

For women, symptoms of a heart attack are, in general not the same as a man, and they don't know why that is, but they do know that more women can die because they don't realize that the classic symptoms of a heart attack have always been men's heart attacks, they were overlooking what they thought were their heart attacks. So women's are chest pain or unexplained anxiety, which can be anywhere in the chest, it might feel like fullness or squeezing, so it might feel like you have that heaviness in your chest, like my mom talked about. Pain in your arm, neck or jaw, it is more common in women and the pain won't necessarily be in the left arm and it won't necessarily be as intense, it will typically radiate up into your jaw. Stomach pain, feeling like you have the flu, or like heartburn, feeling like you have pressure on your chest, feeling breathlessness, which is a lot like shortness of breath. You won't be doing anything at all and you just feel like you can't quite catch your breath, or feeling light headed. Sweating, it will be like a cold sweat and then extreme tiredness.

Now, I know a lot of those are very similar; there are some very subtle differences. I think it is important, if you feel anything like either of those I described, whether you are a man or a woman, that you certainly should do what you need to do to get tested and evaluated.

So, what I want to do to end this podcast, it's not going to be a super long podcast, but I wanted to tell you a little story about some stuff that has been going on. My mom is doing better, she is excellent, she is going to cardiac rehab, which is where you go, like two or three days a week and do some exercise with a physical therapist to try to get back on your feet, to get back to where you need to be. She is doing that and she is feeling much better, and she says that, you know having that cardiac cath, they go in there and they open up those arteries, that it has made a world of difference in how she felt. She is just feeling great.

I want to encourage you today that if you have kidney disease, that you are making sure you are taking care of your heart too. So make a doctor's appointment and get your check up and make sure they are checking your blood for the C – reactive protein, which tests the inflammation in your body. Homocysteine which helps your doctor determine a level of heart disease and your cholesterol levels which give a potential for a heart attack. They also need to check and EKG or ECG which shows problems with the electrical activity in your heart. If they think you have had a heart attack they will do an EKG and it will show if there has been some problems with the electrical conduction through your heart, and that is showing, like if you have muscle that is weak or dying it won't conduct electricity that your body uses to produce your heartbeat, so it will show on that report.

A cardiac stress test, if you need it, that is walking on a treadmill or other ways that they can do it, they will stress your heart to see how it responds, and it gives your doctor an overall picture of how your heart is looking. And if you can get a heart scan done, it is a cardiac; it checks your cardiac calcium score which shows the buildup of calcium in your arteries and veins. Those are things that can lead, if you don't have any other risk of heart attack, you may have a high level, or it might reassure you that you are doing fine. Those are usually not very expensive, probably won't be covered by insurance, but you can usually find like a coupon or an inexpensive way to do that.

Another thing you need to do is to educate yourself about cholesterol, healthy eating, healthy exercise, doing those sorts of things, you need to start walking, exercising, make sure that you are doing those things to reduce your stress. When you exercise your stress your heart gently and then it learns how to respond and then when you feel that stress in other parts of your life, you are better able to respond to it. Do just what is comfortable, talk to your doctor, but try to get to where you are walking about 30 minutes a day and add time if you are even more comfortable than that.

And last but not least, keep a food journal, you need to make sure you know what you are eating, track down, make sure you are not getting too much salt and try to keep your diet as healthy as possible, but if you are not quite seeing the change, you might want to try to track your food and then ask the dietitian to look at it and know what you are doing. I do have a book on heart healthy living with kidney disease, and I will put a link to that in our show notes. Today I just wanted to remind you that you need to try to be heart healthy and take care of your body and take care of your heart. That is very important in addition to your kidney's part of your health, so overall make sure your doctor is looking at the whole picture and make sure you know where you are at.

So thank you for listening today and we will talk to you later, Bye-Bye.