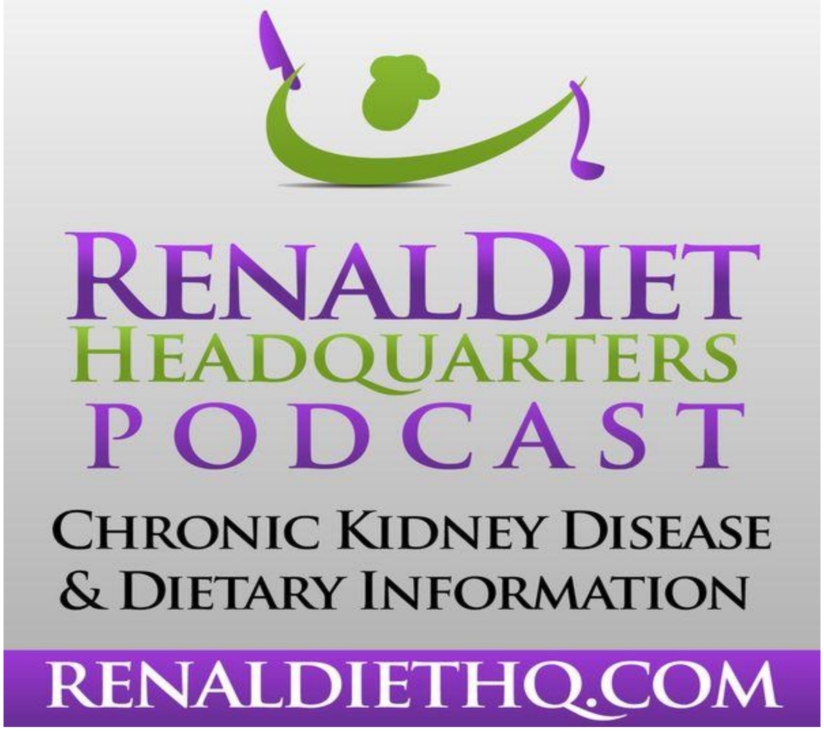

Welcome to the Renal Diet Headquarters Podcast with your host, Mathea Ford, CEO of Renal Diet Headquarters. This is our weekly talk about how you can succeed with a kidney diet, brought to you by RenalDietHQ.com, a website whose mission is to be the most valued resource on kidney disease that people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

Hi, this is Mathea Ford, with Renal Diet Headquarters; this is podcast number twelve, being published on March 12, 2014. You can find more information and our show notes I talk about at RenalDietHQ.com/012. Send me an email with your questions to podcast@renaldietHQ.com, about any questions you have for this show.

Okay, this week we have some very exciting things going on. Today, when this podcast is being released, March 12th, is registered dietitian day. If you didn't know what a registered dietitian is, it is someone who goes though lots of training, I, myself, am a registered and licensed dietitian. A dietitian goes through lots of schooling and training which includes 4 years of college, we get undergraduate degree, and then we go to an additional training of an internship.

In my case, I went through the ARMY and in podcast number 1; I explained how I became a dietitian. I went into the ARMY and did my internship, it was roughly 9 months long, and in that time I learned about nutrition inside a hospital, I learned about nutrition in a kitchen, and I learned about nutrition in the community. The thing that I love is nutrition in the kitchen. One of the things I do every day now is work in a hospital in the kitchen with nutrition, and I supervise the meals to make sure they are healthy. That is one of the things that brings me a great deal of pleasure. Late last year, I had the opportunity to switch to a different job, which is more community based. At first that is what I wanted to do, as the time came closer, I decided I enjoyed the joy and energy I get from making new recipes, making sure that the food is healthy and serving people healthy meals, even though they are sick. Just so you know that is what I love to do.

Registered dietitians do all kinds of things. We write a book, that is something I do as well, and we also work with patients inside the hospital and outside the hospital to control weight, to maintain a healthy diet and control their diabetes. All of those things together make dietitians a very diverse group of people. When you meet a registered dietitian, you should realize they are very well trained and educated about a specific topic, which is nutrition.

The other thing I wanted to talk about today, and I also wanted to say happy registered dietitian day to all the registered dietitians that I know, and those that I know vicariously through this podcast, or will know some day in the future. I appreciate everything that each dietitian does and I think we all try very hard to be helpful to our patients that we serve.

Back to the other topic, it is National Kidney Day tomorrow, March 13th, World Kidney Day, is what I meant to say. I have some information about your kidneys, you may not realize how hard they work, although, I think as you develop kidney disease you start realize how much the affect everything you do and everything in your body. Your kidneys keep you healthy by controlling your body fluid, making sure you are making red blood cells, keeping your blood minerals, like potassium, phosphorus and sodium balanced. They control your blood pressure. Kidneys remove the waste from your blood stream and they help to make the Vitamin D in your bones work.

Last week I talked about the new nutrition labels, how you are going to find out how much Vitamin D and potassium, potentially that will happen with the new labels. You will see how much is in your food. If you need to increase your Vitamin D intake it will be very helpful with the new label.

Problems that kidney disease can cause are things like heart disease, it can draw calcium out of your bones which makes them weaker, it can cause heart attacks, or stroke. So what that means is blood type disorders. You can get anemia (I will soon be releasing a book on anemia, it will be available in Kindle and CreateSpace, it will talk about what anemia is, and how it affects kidney disease). Kidney disease can cause kidney failure, diabetes can cause the kidney failure, high blood pressure, and it will cause high blood pressure because they can no longer regulate blood pressure properly. Kidney disease can also cause nerve damage due to the buildup of waste in the blood if they don’t work properly, they will lead to more damage.

Risk factors, things that lead to developing kidney disease, are diabetes, high blood pressure, age (if you are over 60 you are more likely to develop kidney disease), and also family history, if you have polycystic kidney disease in your family you are more likely to develop it.

Most of these things are controllable. High blood pressure and diabetes can be controlled, that is two of the best things you can do to reduce your risk of developing kidney failure.

Symptoms of kidney failure are things like being tired (which can be from anemia or kidney failure), difficult or painful urination, increased thirst, blood in your urine or foamy urine, puffy eyes, or edema (swelling of the face, hands or abdomen), any of those things can be a symptom of kidney failure, so make sure to talk to your doctor about what you need to do and if you are developing kidney failure.

Tests that your doctor can do to check to see if you are sick are urine and blood screen / urine albumin to a creatinine ratio. They can check your glomerular filtration rate (EGFR), and usually what it will is called is a EGFR because they don't make you do a 24 hour urine and then bring it in, they just kind of estimate it based on formulas using your age, race and other things, they can estimate what it should be.

That is a little bit about kidney disease and what causes it, on World Kidney Day. I just encourage you, if you have diabetes, high blood pressure or if one of your family members does, please encourage them to make sure they know what their labs are, and they know if they have protein in their urine or they know if their diabetes is not under control, or to make sure their doctor is checking them for urine or kidney failure problems. Know your labs, know what can happen.

The main topic of today is to talk about caregivers. Because this month, I have designated caregiver month and I want to talk about and be thankful for and appreciate caregivers out there. Caregivers are a BIG deal, they take care of their loved ones and most of the attention is given to the person who is diagnosed with the chronic illness, they are the ones that suffer the physical and emotional effects of the illness the most.

However, it is important not to overlook their caregivers. Family members and friends are very affected. Caregivers can suffer their own emotional distress. They have very few outlets to address them because they are taking care of the sick person and no one realizes how stressful it is to be a caregiver. As a caregiver, you might face new responsibilities you didn't have to deal with before. You may feel overwhelmed. You may feel isolated and alone. There will be times when caregiving your loved one might feel rewarding, so one minute you are feeling isolated and alone and the next you feel rewarded because the doctor says the lab test are better and things are going great, and you are thinking, 'Oh great, I did good this month, Yea!'.

Things you can do to make it easier for both of you. You might be caring for a spouse or you could be responsible for administrating care to a parent or perhaps your child. No matter what your circumstances are, your new role will take some getting used to.

I think that it is important to realize that family caregivers are almost never trained for the responsibilities that they are suddenly facing. Most caregivers are not healthcare providers, nor did they ever anticipate the situation they suddenly find themselves in. As a caregiver, you want to provide the best care you can to your loved one and you feel lost sometimes, just completely lost because you have no idea what is going on and sometime what the doctor is even talking about. I want to give you today ten quick tips to make your new role easier. Then I want to talk about the new caregiver product we are coming out with later this month.

First of all, a quick tip is to learn as much as you can about your loved ones medical condition. Knowledge IS power. You will feel far less overwhelmed when you understand what is going on with them and their body and how you can manage their needs. So when you understand the diabetes and you understand the things that increase their kidney failure, and how potassium affects their body. Read about it, read blog posts and books. Read whatever and ask lots of questions. Write down questions and ask questions, but that is another one of my tips. Learn as much as you can about your loved ones medical condition, number 1.

Number 2, take breaks. You must get out from time to time and do things outside of the illness. You didn't choose the role that you are now in, and sometimes you need a mental health break in order to see to your own needs. This could be taking a walk around the neighborhood or going out with friends. You are going to feel completely responsible sometimes for this person much like, I remember when my daughter was born, and she came home, she had oxygen and monitors on her all the time, because she was born premature, and that was so stressful because I felt like I could never leave the house for about 6 weeks because I didn't trust anyone else to care for her. That was a very difficult thing to learn, that, yes I can give that responsibility to someone else for a period of time even if it was just 5 minutes and obviously we are not talking about a small child in this case most of the time. Even if you are talking about a child you are probably talking about a child that able to be cared for by another person with some instructions. So take some breaks.

Number 3, find support. See if you can connect with other caregivers, knowing that you are not alone is comforting. Not only can it be helpful to talk to others so that you can gain support, you might find that giving support to others is also helpful. You may find someone you can have coffee with, you may find someone to talk to on the phone, but at the very least you will understand that you are not alone.

Number 4, be an advocate for your loved one. Never ignore what your loved ones doctor are telling them, but you spend time with them on a daily basis, and you are closer to the situation. If you feel the need for more information or changes to care, speak up. Maybe your loved one does not feel comfortable saying something to the doctor or nurse, but you can. You know when something does not seem right.

Number 5, find a stress outlet. Learn to journal, blog, crochet, read a book or whatever you need to do to distress. Taking care of someone else is time consuming and it takes a lot of your emotional energy. Try your best to find an outlet that will allow you to work off and frustration or stress.

Number 6, take care of yourself. You still have your own health to worry about. Don't forget that a lack of sleep, a lack of exercise and a poor diet can have mental and physical effects on your body, just as it does on your loved one. Don't forget to take care of yourself.

Number 7, help but don't do everything for them. You are there to help them when necessary; you should try to encourage your loved one to be independent. You don't want them to become completely dependent on you so they need you all the time. Through their independence, they can gain confidence and self-assurance. You are faced with a situation where they are suddenly required to be somewhat dependent on you, and that will place stress on you, but it is also stressful for them, probably to be in a situation where they suddenly in need of assistance where they may have not needed assistance before. Help them but don't do everything for them. Don't take away that last bit of independence that they might have.

Number 8, be realistic. You might feel like a super hero sometimes, but you are not one. Learn your limits and stick to them. Don't spread yourself to thin. Take care of yourself and be realistic.

Number 9, ask for help. Other family members and friends are probably more than happy to pitch in and help on occasion, but they may be afraid to ask. Most people are just standing by, waiting for someone to tell them what they need. Don't be afraid to use other resources. I am amazed sometimes that the people feel like, oh I have to do all this and I have to do all that, and really if they just asked, someone would bring over something or do something to help them, but they don't realize you are hurting, they don't realize you need help.

Number 10, keep a support network. Don't lose your friends, it is easy to lose yourself in the needs of your loved one but keep in touch with your own friends and other family members so that you don't lose that connection to yourself that you have. You can become very involved with your loved ones needs and forget about your friends and family.

So this week I gave you the ten tips. Let me go over those.

1) Learn as much as you can about your loved ones medical condition.
2) Take some breaks.
3) Find support.
4) Be an advocate for your loved one.
5) Find a stress outlet.
6) Take care of yourself.
7) Help but don't do everything for them.
8) Be realistic.
9) Ask for help.
10) Keep a support network.

So those were the ten caregiver things and this week in podcast number twelve, has been about caregivers and I want you to remember that this month we are talking about caregivers, and I have talked about it last week a little bit, but we are developing a product that will have information for caregivers. This was just a little bit of the information that I am developing for caregivers, but the product will be a 40 page book on things to help you to be a better caregiver and help you understand how being a caregiver can be rewarding, and things to help you do the best you can.

It will also have the information, like I said last week, about aromatherapy, reflexology, craniosacral therapy, and all those things are ways that you can help your loved one or the person you are caring for to be healthier and to be in better shape without medically changing things. So you will want to make sure the doctor know about doing some aromatherapy or something, aromatherapy will include lotion and you rub peoples feet with lotion, or their hands and doing that a couple times a day, the body will absorb the essential oil and it will help to ease the pains and fears and emotions, and that will be helpful to people with chronic kidney disease. And, maybe you don't realize this, but it is also helpful to you. There are tips in there for helping yourself as well as helping your loved one.

I made this offer last week and next week I will be giving you a link to the page where you can go to pre-order the book. We will have the book available as a physical book or as a download. It will be about ½ price for you, I have not decided the exact price because I am trying to give a really good deal to the people on the podcast and the people who are willing to order early and help me know that they are interest in it. Those of you who help me with doing a little reading, I will have an extra special deal for you. For the people on the podcast you will get a really good deal.

If you want to help me out with reading a section or two email me at podcast@renaldiethq.com and I will be offering, next week, a link to a page where you can pre-order the book for a special deal.

The last thing I want to say this week to wish my husband, happy 10th anniversary, we will be married for 10 years on the 15th of March and we have two lovely children and every day I am so happy to have such a wonderful husband that I love very much and who loves me, and supports me, I couldn't be happier that God brought him into my life and brought us together. He listens to the podcasts, I don't know how far after I release this one he will listen to it, but I do want to wish him happy anniversary and I love you.

This week we went to Vegas, and we celebrated for our anniversary and we went to see Tim and Faith and Cirque Du Solei show, so I will tell you more about that next week, because we are coming home today. I recorded this one a little bit early, so we are coming home from Vegas while this is being released, so I will tell you about the shows next week.

Have a great week and I look forward to talking to you again next week about more caregiver stuff. Make sure you are getting your kidney's checked out and tell someone happy kidney day tomorrow. Bye!

You've been listening to the Renal Diet Headquarters podcast. Head on over to the website at www.RenalDietHQ.com/go/email to sign up for our email list and get exciting updates every week about what is happening. Thanks and we will talk to you again next week!!