

Powerful Patient #29, 2008 Week 23

Host: Joyce Graff, WebTalkRadio.net

Appreciating Healthy Kidneys

This show is about kidney appreciation. We talk about what kidneys do, how to keep them healthy, and how to replace kidney function if yours are no longer working. Joyce talks with Cindy Barclay, R.N., about her book, That Damn Dialysis.



Cindy Barclay, R.N.

1) About Our Guests

Cindy Barclay, R.N., is the CEO of Quality Dialysis, a service providing staff-assisted in-home dialysis. She started this business after 20 years as a nurse, seeing patients for whom coming to a center three times a week was a hardship. Some are too frail, some have mobility or transportation issues, some just want to dialyze in a more comforting or convenient setting. See <http://www.athomewithqualitydialysis.com>

2) About Kidney Health

If others in your family have had problems with kidney health, you need to understand your own personal risks. Many kidney issues “run in families” – are caused by a tiny misspellings in one gene that if passed to you, might cause the same problem to occur. But the good news is that most of the worst consequences of these risks are avoidable – if you take action. If you understand that you are “at risk”, and you work to prevent these issues, most of them are preventable.

The two primary factors that can lead to loss of kidney function are:

- Degenerative kidney disease (high blood pressure, diabetes, or other risks)
- Kidney cysts or tumors (polycystic kidney disease, kidney cancer, etc.)

Nutrition is the most important key to kidney health. Poor nutrition can lead to high blood pressure, or diabetes. Obesity is a major risk factor for both of these.

Remember:

- Five servings of fruits and vegetables every day
- Take a multi-vitamin
- Get a modest amount of protein, but not too much protein
- \$5 will go farther in the fruits and vegetables section of the grocery store than at a fast food restaurant, without the fats and salt that are the primary ingredients in fast food.

3) **About Dialysis**

An artificial kidney machine tries to emulate the major functions of the kidney

- Remove excess fluid
- Filter toxins from the blood

There are two primary forms of dialysis:

- **Hemodialysis** channels your blood through an artificial kidney machine and back into your body. This is usually done in three 4-6 hour sessions at a center or at home with staff assistance.
- **Peritoneal dialysis** uses a pouch installed in your abdominal cavity to wash the toxins and excess fluid out of the body. This is something the patient can learn to do alone or with help from a family member. Not every patient is eligible for peritoneal dialysis. Speak with your doctor about the feasibility of this procedure for you. This is normally done daily for 1.5 hours, or six nights a week while you sleep for 7-10 hours per night.

The goal is to maintain **balance** in your body –

- Fluids
- Salt
- Potassium
- Phosphorus
- Protein – at least 8 ounces of lean meat (more than is good for an ailing kidney)
- Iron

Remember the saying “what goes in must come out” – well with dialysis, the “out” channel is disrupted, so you have to watch carefully what goes in. It is extremely important to work with your nutritionist and follow the dietary guidelines carefully.

Many of these guidelines are the opposite of what you may have been told when you were taking care of an ailing kidney. Once the kidney no longer works, the priority shifts to making sure you are getting the right nutrition.

4) **Resources**

The National Kidney Foundation has good information on dialysis options and nutrition www.kidney.org

The Kidney Cancer Association has good information on treatment of advanced kidney cancer. <http://www.curekidneycancer.org>

The VHL Family Alliance has good information on gentle treatments for cysts and tumors of the kidney, helping to remove tumors which may grow to be nasty cancers, while working to preserve kidney function. <http://www.vhl.org>