

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple A Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness segment. This is Katie Johnson, and joining me as my guest today is Dr. Zvi Levran, a urologist here at Lake Region Healthcare. Good morning, Zvi.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Good morning, Katie.

Katie Johnson: Well, I want to talk a little bit about a topic that is timely. We're finally going to have some summer weather and talk about kidney stones and preventing them, but, before we do that, let's talk a little bit about your background. Tell us a little bit about your practice, prior to coming to Lake Region Healthcare.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Including my residency, I've been practicing urology for 25 years now.

Katie Johnson: Wow.

Dr. Zvi Levran: I was in Detroit area, and then moved here.

Katie Johnson: What brought you to Fergus Falls?

Dr. Zvi Levran: It's a long story, but to make it short, this is a lot more calm area, beautiful lakes, woods, not the craziness of Detroit with seven million people.

Katie Johnson: I can only imagine the contrast.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Absolutely true.

Katie Johnson: Well, I hope you're enjoying the lakes and especially the summer season in Fergus Falls. That's kind of what we want to talk about today is, when we start to spend more time outdoors, we have a greater risk of dehydration in the heat, and that can lead to a common problem you treat here, and that's kidney stones.

Dr. Zvi Levran: As a matter of fact, and I don't mind the winters because I love the ice and the snow, so that doesn't bother me, but it's known that, even in the cold of winter, when it's so cold, we don't drink enough water. I have two peaks: when it's very cold or when it's very hot.

Katie Johnson: Interesting. Drinking more water is good advice for any time of the year, to be sure, but when we talk about the causes of kidney stones, what are the main causes?

Dr. Zvi Levran: The number one cause, and I see it, of course, in the winter, too, is we don't drink enough water. It's called dehydration. In the winter, we just don't feel like we need to, so we don't drink enough. In the summer, it's so hot, we get so dehydrated, and most of use do not drink enough water.

Katie Johnson: What is enough water? That's a common question, I would think. You hear about eight glasses a day, 10 glasses a day. Are they eight ounce glasses 20 ounce bottles?

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How much water does the average person need?

Dr. Zvi Levran: That's a very good question. The average one is two quarts a day, which is about roughly eight glasses of eight ounce each.

Katie Johnson: Okay, that's a good measure to keep in your mind. Other causes that contribute to or we can do to prevent kidney stones, one of them is drinking more lemonade, right?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yes, well, we try to prevent kidney stones, because it's known that two main ingredients are citrate and magnesium, so any foods that have a lot of magnesium, and citrate is found to be in abundance in lemon, not necessarily oranges or grapefruits, whatever. I tell my patient, "Drink a lot of lemonade."

Katie Johnson: That will contribute to your prevention of kidney stones.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Very true. If you have any sugar problems, if you have diabetes, then you drink the lemonade without the sugar, just natural lemon.

Katie Johnson: Even just adding lemon to your water, is that a good kind of win-win with the water and the lemon?

Dr. Zvi Levran: That's a great idea. Anytime you go to a restaurant or a friend's just ask to drop some wedges of lemon into your water.

Katie Johnson: Another important aspect is avoiding something called oxalate. How do we do that?

Dr. Zvi Levran: It's known that the most common stones are calcium oxalate, so the notion is, "Well, if I cut down on my milk products and cheese, all the calcium, then I won't get kidney stones." That's a common mistake, and I tell all my patients, "That's not the reason." Calcium is a positive cation, it's called, and it binds to an anion, which is a negative ion. The most common one is oxalate. There's others: There's urates; there's phosphates, but oxalates are the most common stones there are. Probably 85 to 90% of the people have them. You probably want to know, where do we find all these oxalates?

Katie Johnson: Yeah, because I certainly don't open my fridge and intentionally eat oxalate.

Dr. Zvi Levran: That's very good, but it's a lot of foods that we don't even think about, such as chocolate.

Katie Johnson: Hmm, darn.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yes, or dark, leafy vegetables, like spinach for example has a lot of oxalates. The more you eat, it binds to calcium, and then you form stones.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned chocolate. I think there's a couple of other of my favorites on the

list. Coffee?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Correct. Coffee, Coke, Mountain Dew's, even dark tea. It's known to have a lot of oxalates, so you have to moderate, or, as I tell my patient, "Flush it with a big glass of water with lemon."

Katie Johnson: You can maybe enjoy in moderation, but follow it with lemon water.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Absolutely true.

Katie Johnson: Excellent. Any other tips/advice you'd like to share with our listeners when we're talking the topic of dehydration and kidney stones this morning?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yes, don't add salt, because salt, especially sodium, is known to have an exchange mechanism in the kidney, and if you take too much salt, the body will try to preserve it and dump the calcium instead into your urinary tract, forming more stones. I tell my patients, "Just cut down on your salt." The next thing, of course, is cut down on the meat protein. Anything in moderation, but really avoid, avoid dehydration.

Katie Johnson: Is there a certain age or other risk factors for getting kidney stones?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Great question. Any age. The youngest I've seen was a 2-year-old, not here. It was in Detroit. He had a huge stone, measuring almost half an inch.

Katie Johnson: What about, if you've had one stone, are you more likely to have more?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Again, great question. We say that if you had one stone, you'll pass another. Once you have one stone, at least we discuss what are the causes, how to change your lifestyle, change your eating habit, drinking habit, at least some things, some moderation. A lot of people benefit just from these, what we call behavior modification.

Katie Johnson: Well, excellent tips today. From what I've heard--thankfully, I've never had to experience it myself--it's worth the effort to try to prevent kidney stones.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yes, as a matter of fact, they're very painful. For men, when we say it's worse than labor, only women can appreciate that-

Katie Johnson: Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Zvi Levran: But it's really painful, so avoid it.

Katie Johnson: Well, thank you for those excellent tips. A reminder again to stay hydrated, particularly in the summer, but in the winter, as well; drink water; add lemon, pure lemon; and avoid those oxalate foods, salt, and maybe even meat.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Right.

Katie Johnson: All right.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Correct.

Katie Johnson: Well, thank you, Dr. Zvi Levran, urologist at Lake Region Healthcare, joining me today on Apple A Day to talk about dehydration and prevention of kidney stones. Dr. Levran, thank you so much for your time today.

Dr. Zvi Levran: You're welcome. It's my pleasure.

Katie Johnson: Dr. Zvi Levran and Katie Johnson, from Lake Region Healthcare, reminding you that there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.