

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple-A-Day, Lake Region Healthcare's Health and Wellness Show where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I'm Katie Johnson, your host and my guest today is Dr. Robert Kester. He is a urologist and he's the newest member of our medical staff here at Lake Region Healthcare. Good morning, Dr. Kester.

Dr. Kester: Good morning.

Katie Johnson: Thank you for taking some time to join me today and letting me introduce our community to you, and talk about the exciting news that we have a full-time urologist back on staff here at Lake Region Healthcare. As we let our listeners get to know you, why don't we start by telling us a little bit about yourself. Where are you from originally and where did you grow up?

Dr. Kester: Sure Katie. First of all, thank you very much for the opportunity to reach out to your listeners through this medium. I am from Philadelphia originally, and I grew up in Wilmington, Delaware. Basically, I'm from a family that had several physicians, and we feel that medicine is a noble calling, and that's how I decided to pursue medicine was with my family. In high school, it hit me all at once that I'm going to be a doctor.

Katie Johnson: How did you settle on urology as a specialty then?

Dr. Kester: Well, during medical school obviously, you have to decide residency programs. I was torn between surgery and medicine, and I felt that urology had a bit of both, some medical problems, some surgical problems. Plus, they had a very nice clientele, very nice people, and I enjoyed interacting with and very much still do, with the population of patients that make up a urology practice.

Katie Johnson: We should talk a little bit about where you have practice leading up to coming to join us here at Lake Region Healthcare. You have a lot of experience behind you as you come into Lake Region.

Dr. Kester: Yeah, I would say the main aspects, and let's focus on them, were residency programs in New York, in New York City, actually, Brookdale Hospital. Later in my practice I did a fellowship at the University of Miami in reconstructive urology, which generally had to do with female cystoceles, rectoceles, with bladder dysfunction situations. For example, patients who have urgency, frequency that medications don't help, treatments of that nature, InterStim Botox, bladder injections and we basically can help an interstitial cystitis, which is a vexing problem, difficult to diagnose, difficult to help, but we can help an awful lot of patients with these sort of symptoms, medically and surgically.

Katie Johnson: And most recently you've been practicing in Florida, as I understand it. What made you decide to make the move from Florida to Lake Region here in Minnesota?

Dr. Kester: Okay, well let me continue with practice before.

Katie Johnson: Oh, sure.

Dr. Kester: After the residency, basically I practiced in the State of Maine for 20 years. A colleague of mine in Florida asked me to join him, and I felt, why not try something a little different? But I find south Florida is very much different than rural Maine was, and I didn't really want to continue with that. So we looked around the country. I felt that going back to Maine was an option, but see what else was out there and basically recruiters from everywhere would contact me. What happened was I got reached out to by a Lake region in a very positive way and I recall very vividly speaking with the Vice President, Luke Draxten.

Katie Johnson: Let's talk a little bit more about your practice in specific and the types of diagnostic and treatment options that you offer to your patients.

Dr. Kester: Well, urology has the ability to diagnose and treat patients in a way that can be definitive and that's one of the issues that I really liked about urology. You generally could come up with a diagnosis. There were very few mysteries in a diagnosis of your urological problems, either you had it or you don't. So the kind of thing that I really liked about it was you could get to the diagnosis pretty quickly and obviously treatment options flow from diagnosis, so the treatment options could therefore be more well addressed.

Katie Johnson: Let's talk specifically about issues that you treat.

Dr. Kester: Men Issues, male issues, probably a very common one for symptomatic problems is men who have problems with their prostate obstructing or they have irritation and difficulties related to prostatitis inflammatory and or infectious diseases in the prostate. Another very common problem for men in terms of diagnostics is the elevated PSA, which is a common blood test that family doctors, internists, and others get and what do you do with an elevated PSA? So that goes into a whole category of evaluation, including prostate biopsy, which we do with very much idea in mind to keep the patient comfortable, local anesthesia, et cetera. Those are common things for men and both men and women can have issues with kidney stones, issues with the urban infections, issues with blood in the urine, these are very, very common.

For women another... kidney stones can be very easy to take care of or very challenging to take care of. It depends, everyone is different. For women, main problem we would see for women is probably recurrent urinary infections. Also patients with urgency and frequency that need to start on a basic medicine and if that's not suitable then there are several medicine steps that we can take. At some point a women may not benefit from medicines, then there are treatments that we say neuromodulations, implants, surgical ones placed, InterStim is one, been around for a long while and another one is a type of, not

an implant, but a treatment where a patch is put on a lower leg and that is helpful too.

These treatments are now also being helped with Botox and it's the same kind of Botox that people may use for cosmetic reasons, but it can be useful in the bladder as well to decrease urgency and frequency. As I mentioned prior, there is a diagnosis, interstitial cystitis, which happens in women and that's when everything fails and there are treatments for these things.

Katie Johnson: You have touched on these surgical options and I think these problems are often poorly understood, that repair can help your overall bladder and bowel control and really just improve your quality of life. Do you have some advice for patients as to when and why they should seek medical help?

Dr. Kester: Yeah, symptoms are a are the number one thing that drive patients to see the urologist. However, you know the men may come in for their prostate checkups and PSA and whatnot. Women generally don't come in unless they have a symptom, infections, urgency, frequency, and obviously these things are embarrassing in talking about and more so for women than men. The issue is don't fear coming in because there are treatments for the urgency, frequency symptoms that are generally medical and generally help a lot.

Now, women may not know that they have a bulge or they know it and women, however, they will know if they're leaking urine. Leaking urine incontinence can be related to urgency and frequency, we call that urgency incontinence. There is another type of incontinence called stress incontinence. You can have one or the other or both, mixed incontinence. Stress is when you cough or sneeze and the urine comes out and you can't really hold it in. It can be mild, like if you have vigorous exercise, for example, playing tennis, if you're younger woman and it brings it on, whereas normal activities it doesn't, or you can be a woman that wears five or 10 adult pads every day and sits there embarrassed to talk about it to anybody because she feels she's alone with this. No, you're not alone. There are many women with the same thing, okay? We could, we could fill an auditorium with women that have similar problems, you just don't know it.. So I would say don't fear it.

Katie Johnson: How about when you're not working? What do you enjoy doing in your free time? I understand you've even used some of your free time to do some medical humanitarian work as well, but what are the things you'd like to do when you're away from work?

Dr. Kester: Yeah, Katie and I just had a long discussion about the work for women who had what we would call a vesicovaginal fistula, obstetrical, where they would have these developed in childbirth. That was a remarkable experience in Sierra Leone in West Africa. I'll never forget that experience, not just the surgical part, but the whole social part of Africa.

I've done research and presented a lot of research in the U.S. and a couple of meetings overseas as well. I've been an editor of journals. I like to write in general, I'm not the greatest story writer, I've tried. I like to read, I've written poetry over the years. Stain glass has been, at one time, a very strong passion of mine. Sketching and sculpting over the years and these sort of things are... I don't really have a lot of time to do any one thing but these are things. And I like to stay physically fit, swimming, road cycling my bike and I just heard about the triathlon here, so maybe over the winter I get myself back into good shape again and think about it.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, that would be fantastic. It sounds like between your physical activity interests and your artistic interests, I think a Fergus Falls and Ottertail County is going to be a great fit for you. Anything else you would like our listeners or patients to know about your practice at Lake Region Healthcare?

Dr. Kester: Well, I'm very pleased to be here in Fergus Falls. One of the other things if I could mention that kept bringing Fergus Falls back to my attention. Well this brought it back in a big way, was that newspaper article and that made international headlines, and I'm trying to think what that was all about.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, the German writer?

Dr. Kester: The German people that didn't write such a good story about Fergus Falls.

Katie Johnson: No.

Dr. Kester: So it brought this place, international attention as a good place to be. Yeah. So that was of interest, but I just wanted to close by saying I'm very, very appreciative to be given the opportunity by Lake Region Healthcare to serve the patients and people in this community. And thank you very much.

Katie Johnson: Well, we are certainly happy to have you here. Dr. Robert Kester, urologist, bringing full time urology services back to Lake Region Healthcare right here in the main clinic in Fergus Falls. Certainly give us a call for appointments with Dr. Kester if there is an area that he could help improve your quality of life as well. Dr. Kester, thanks for joining me today and again, welcome to Lake Region Healthcare.

Dr. Kester: Thank you very much, Katie.

Katie Johnson: Dr. Robert Kester and Katie Johnson on Apple A Day Today reminding you there is so much to do here, stay healthy for it. Have a great day.