

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome Apple a Day Lake Region Healthcare's weekly health and wellness program. This is Katie Johnson and my guest today is Dr. Zvi Levran, urologist at Lake Region Healthcare. June is Men's Health Month and, of course, urology is an important specialty for men of all ages. Dr. Levran, let's expound on that a little bit. Why is urology important to men of all ages?

Dr. Zvi Levran: It's extremely important because men usually don't talk about their problems. They, unless you ask them, specifically, even the young guys, they will not admit to any problems and that's wrong. In my department, we ask everybody and we get the men to discuss their issues and they're very appreciative of that.

Katie Johnson: There's really no reason to have to be so private or so guarded about these issue and live with them.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Absolutely. Men are just like women. We all have issues, we all have problems and the more you talk about it, the more you're open about them with the right person, I think, it's excellent and it's very helpful for your health.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely. I want to talk a little bit about prostate in specific, to start out with. What is the prostate?

Dr. Zvi Levran: The prostate is a very important organ in the body. It develops when we go into puberty and starts to grow. It contains a lot of enzymes and proteins that together with other juices, we call it, mix with the semen and together the mixture really helps promote health of the sperm. At the young age, it's very important to have a healthy sperm travel through the urethra, outside the penis and deposit it into the female vagina. That's why this gland is extremely important for young men.

Katie Johnson: Then, as you age, prostate cancer becomes more prevalent. The PSA is the screening for prostate cancer, as I understand it and has a little bit of, maybe controversy or misunderstanding around it. Can you touch on that a little bit?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yeah. First of all, you mentioned as we age and it's true. As we age, this gland is not doing much for us because most guys don't care about having any children after a certain age. This prostate is just sitting there and it's growing. In some guys it grows to a very large size, it just causes problem with urination. There was a huge issue and debate, not only here but all over the United States, about the importance of the PSA. There was the U.S. Task Force that took to their hands to decide not to screen and those completely negated by the American Urological Association, which looked carefully into it. They came up with the guidelines. Those guidelines specifically say that if there's no history in the family and you're healthy, true, you don't have to check it, but if there's any issues, if you have problems, if you have blood in the urine, if you have a family history of prostate cancer, absolutely, we have to check your prostate by an exam as well as a PSA blood test.

Katie Johnson: You are a proponent under those circumstances, correct?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yes I am, but I follow the guidelines of the American Urological Association, which makes complete sense to me.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely. What treatments are available for issues with the prostate and prostate cancer in specific?

Dr. Zvi Levran: There's, of course, benign growth of prostate and there's so many problems involved in that and there's many treatments that we offer right here at Lake Region. With prostate cancer, it's a little more touchy because, again, it depends on the diagnosis, the staging, the grading of the cancer, which we go over everything and then, of course, I discuss with the patient so many options, including observation, which is very common right now. Not every prostate cancer has to be treated, either by surgery or radiation, so we observe, we call it watchful waiting.

Katie Johnson: Is it true that most men will develop some kind of cancer in their prostate by some age?

Dr. Zvi Levran: It's true that when you're 80 your chances are very high of having a little bit of prostate cancer. When we go down to the 50's, 60's, 70's, it depends on family history, genetics, your overall well-being and, of course, the exam and then checking of the PSA, just to make sure that you do not harbor any prostate cancer.

Katie Johnson: When it comes to other urology issues, added in with the prostate, what are some of the signs? You mentioned a couple of them earlier that indicate I should seek medical help.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yes. This is very important. In the young men, we're talking infertility. If you can't have children, don't think twice, come visit. There's many ways to treat that. Of course, as we age, now we're talking about urinary symptoms. If there's a burning sensation, if there's blood in the urine, if there's blood in the semen, then you should seek help. Don't just hold it in, it's very important because you may have prostate cancer or not, there could be just benign conditions. The urinary tract involves the kidneys, the urethra so you want to make sure you don't have any other issues relating to those organs.

Katie Johnson: What about preventative steps? What are steps that men can take to help guard their urological health?

Dr. Zvi Levran: That's a great question. We recommend, of course, drinking lots of water. I recommend lemonade to prevent stones. I recommend prostate health complex for older men, probably 50's, 60's, 70's ... 50's is not old.

Katie Johnson: No, not at all.

Dr. Zvi Levran: No. Prostate health complex contains certain vitamins and herbs that are very good for the prostate. Yes, we don't have a lot of studies about those, but it's proven for

many men to help, so we've got to consider those.

Katie Johnson: Are those something you buy over the counter?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Yes, indeed, in any vitamin place.

Katie Johnson: How about the significant other? What role can she play in a man's urological health?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Huge role. I think, if not for the women, a lot of the men would not be around because men don't complain and that's the problem. The women see everything and they mention to the husband, to the significant other, "You have a problem. I want you to go see someone." We are here to help. This department will see anybody at any time, at any age. The significant other ... our women are very important in our lives.

Katie Johnson: As encouragers, right? Not naggers, encouragers.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Correct, as encouragers.

Katie Johnson: Anything else you'd like to add as we talk about men's urological health here during a Men's Health Month?

Dr. Zvi Levran: Not much more. We want to say that everyone in the United States ... There's a lot more awareness now of men's health. Not only women with their breasts. We talk about our privates too and we're talking the kidneys, bladders, what to do? What to drink? When to look at problems? Don't ignore them, that's my basic ... my message to you. Don't ignore your body.

Katie Johnson: That is great advice. Really, what a great opportunity you have here as part of the team at Lake Region Healthcare to be a part of the team that helps care for men's health. We were talking before we came on the air, from primary care to the referrals, to urology, to the partnership that you have with the cancer center, really is a benefit to patients as well.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Absolutely. We have great relationship between the departments and it will only grow better and better.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely. Zvi Levran, thank you so much for sharing your knowledge with us during the Men's Health Month as we talk about prostate and urological health for men. Zvi and Katie Johnson both reminding you that there is so much to do here, stay healthy for it. Have a great day.

Dr. Zvi Levran: Thank you.