



This is our weekly talk about how you can succeed with a kidney diet, brought to you by [RenalDietHQ.com](http://RenalDietHQ.com), a website whose mission is to be the most valued resource on kidney disease that people can use to improve their health.

Hello, and welcome to the Renal Diet Headquarters podcast, we are on lucky number thirteen. This will be released on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and I am your host, Mathea Ford, CEO of Renal Diet Headquarters. You can

find the information I talk about at [www.RenalDietHQ.com/013](http://www.RenalDietHQ.com/013).

So I hope you are having a great spring. We are having beautiful weather in Oklahoma now, although outside there is a wild and crazy dust storm blowing, but otherwise it was 70° today and so it was nice and it will probably rain and ice and snow this weekend. That is just what we get use to here in Oklahoma. I had a good time in Las Vegas, and I want to thank you for your notes from the last podcast and those of you who told me congratulations and thank you very much I like to hear that.

Today I am going to talk about a couple of things; I am going to change my format a little bit. I want to start getting my format down a little better, so what I am going to do is at the beginning, do my little chit-chat and then I am going to give you the two or three things I am going to talk about, so you know if you want to listen to this episode, you know where I am going. Then I will go ahead and talk about those things and then the end of the podcast. So we will see what else changes, obviously it might be a little different if it is an interview, but for now that is where I am going.

Today I am going to talk about three things, # 1) I want to talk about the upcoming AAKP National Patient meeting in Las Vegas, a little teaser there, and # 2) I want to talk about an update on the caregiver guide that I have been talking about in the last couple podcasts, I have been giving you a preview and I told you it was going to be ready at the end of March, so you are going to find out if that will be ready at the end of March or not, and what special deal I am doing for you, and # 3) I am going to talk about caregiver stress and how to keep yourself healthy. So I am going to give you five tips

and ideas on how to have a much better experience as a caregiver by dealing with your stress. So I want to go ahead and get started.

Okay, first up, I am starting off talking about the AAKP National Patient meeting, they just announced in the last few weeks, and it is going to be in Las Vegas from September 26<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>, at the Flamingo hotel, and that is right across the street from Caesars Palace where I just was, and I have stayed at the Flamingo and I think the Flamingo is an excellent hotel as well. They have nice little restaurants out front and it is right next to the area where they have revitalized some of Las Vegas, so it is very nice. I am very excited, I will be there with my husband, and hopefully I will get to speak and we are going to hopefully see about getting an exhibit so we can show our information, and I would love the chance to meet you, and speak and love for you to come by our booth and talk to us. I will let you know more about that as the time approaches. I want to encourage you, if you can come, to try to make it because it is a great opportunity and will be very helpful to you, regardless of what stage of kidney disease, they have information for people with chronic kidney disease, pre-dialysis, dialysis, kidney transplants, and it brings together the patients and health care professionals. They really do a good job with meeting your needs. The hotel information – the hotel is not super expensive and travel, they have a little discount if you book April 1<sup>st</sup> or something. I will have a link to the page in the show notes on my website so you can find out more about that.

# 2) I want to give you an update on the caregiver guide that I have been talking about. I was so excited the other day because I thought, WOW I am 90% done and I am going to have this caregiver guide ready by the last week of March, I was so excited, you have no idea. Then I asked my husband to look at it and said look this over, tell me what you think, give me some ideas, whatever. He read through it, and he had some other ideas, really what he wanted was for it to be a lot more, he thought I could do more and make it bigger, and I guess I was just thinking too small. So it was a bit of a shock, but he really had some great ideas, I knew when he told me about them that we had to incorporate them, because they truly are the right things to do. It has really morphed into a bigger project.

I am determined to keep it at \$97 for a final price, which is what I want to do, but I promised you to give you at least a 50% discount. So that is about \$47 from now until I complete it, which is scheduled now for tax day!! So it will be a little later, but I am hoping to get it done sooner, but from now until April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014, you can get it for \$47 and I am going to tell you what is going to be in it. I know I have talked a little about the aromatherapy guides and stuff in the past. First of all you are getting a physical copy, so it will have a caregiver guide, an explanation of chronic kidney disease and information about what it is like to be a caregiver and how to deal with it. So I have several different resources that I am bringing together, I have gotten lots of feedback

and I am expanding it. What it is like to deal with being a caregiver for a person with kidney disease. Now it will work for people regardless of whether they have kidney disease or not, because it will be a lot about taking care of yourself, stress relief and those kind of things. Kind of what a chronic illness feels like or what you go through as a caregiver, but it is targeted at chronic kidney disease.

And then the second section will be a story almost, a guide going through a caregiver process, so it's a story about a lady named Mrs. Murray, and it takes her journey from like stage 3 through to dialysis, and that is about 60 pages. So the whole thing, all together is going to be about 120 to 150 pages. It is an intimate look at the options for people and how wonderful and at the same time stressful for both the patient and the caregiver. It is just a real walk through. You can read the front, it has a little bit of information about chronic kidney disease and it is going to go into some detail about different parts of chronic kidney disease. The second part is going to be kind of that walk through what happens in stage 3, what happens in stage 4, what sort of decisions are you making, what stressors do you have, what sort of things happen, what sort of resources might you be able to access. I think that that makes it very valuable. It is told as a story, so it makes it easier to read.

Section number 3; complimentary therapies and medicines. So I talked about this before, about how aromatherapy and reflexology can help you cope and deal with pain management. You won't believe how much value this is going to add to your journey with chronic kidney disease as a caregiver. Because it really is going to make you able to do some small things and yes it is not an aspirin and it is not pain relief, but you would be surprised about how easily these aromatherapies will make you feel better. Have you ever walked outside and smelled the fresh air after a rain storm and known just how wonderful that feels, or smelled, my favorite smell is peony, and I am sure there is something calming in that, but it is also that it reminds me of my childhood and my grandmother. Just the scent of a rose can be calming, or lavender can be calming, or doing certain things and how to apply the aromatherapy. Sometimes people think of aromatherapy as like putting it in a little bowl, and you heat it like a Sentsy container, but that is really not the only thing you can do, you can do lots of other things to get some aromatherapy into your life and to the person you are caring for.

Section number 4; worksheets and references. It is going to be all the work sheets you are going to need to keep track of the important data and mile stones, from your medicine that you are tracking, to your mood. We have you covered. Information from signs of complications, exercise tracking and an exercise guide. A sheet with links to videos, a sleeping and resting log, some volume measurements, what do caregivers not know that they should know, what do I ask the doctor, a CD with those worksheets on it. All that is included.

So, what you are going to get, is actually 3 ring heavy binder, that you can use as a reference. It will be easy to find the information that way as well. We are going to send you the 3 ring binder and this package that is shrink wrapped and all you have to do is open up the binder and put it in there. You will love it. We will have them at the caregiver conference the AAKP National meeting. If you want us to ship it to you now you can order it. Go to [www.renaldietHQ.com/go/caregiver](http://www.renaldietHQ.com/go/caregiver) for more information. I won't be shipping them out of the country, you can get access to an online version, and we will have a digital version that can be purchased if you are not in the United States. The order button is there and you can buy now, like I said it will be that price until April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014. I will remind you again before then.

Finally we are getting to the third part, the meat and potatoes of the podcast. I hope you didn't mind me doing a little bit of talking, but I am really excited about the new caregiver guide. Once I got over being stressed and frustrated about my husband telling me we needed to change some things up. I realized how much better more valuable it was going to make it. I am excited about that.

Okay, the meat and the potatoes of the podcast. We are going to talk about caregiver stress. Obviously this month I have been focusing on talking about caregivers, we are making this product for caregivers, but, most of the people that I talk to when they order my product, the monthly meal plans, are the caregivers. So I know that a lot of you out there listening to this are the caregivers. I just want you to know that I care about you and I am listening to you. I want to give you five tips to improve your caregiving and reduce your stress.

#1) Think about your own needs as well as those of the person you are caring for. It is hard to be strong all of the time. Use breaks and something which I have been learning more about, is called respite breaks or respite vacations as times to get relief. So what a respite break or respite vacation is, is when you are able to get away from the caregiving responsibilities that you have and not have the constant burden of making decisions, making sure that they are okay. If it is a break, that might be when you are able to use those breaks to think about your own needs as well as the person you are caring for. If you are not happy and you don't enjoy what you are doing, the person you are caring for is not going to be happy either, I know that is not what you intended, so use those breaks and think about your own needs and make sure to plan for that. It is okay to ask for help.

#2) Journaling. Writing out your words is very therapeutic, writing on a piece of paper is so therapeutic and you can get a little journal, or a notebook or whatever. If you like to type online, there is a website called [www.750words.com](http://www.750words.com) that you can go to and it will let you type in there every day, and the goal is to type 750 words, and you can write first thing in the morning, whatever comes to mind, or you can do the same thing with sheets

of paper. It may keep you from feeling like you are bottling things up inside and feeling like exploding. You can be upset on your piece of paper or on the computer and no one has to see that. You can get it out and what I find is, just getting it out, helps me to work through what I need to do next. You might want to seek out a support group, whether it is online or local, if you feel like you need some help. You would be amazed, there are so many other people going through similar if not exactly the same experience as you and they are willing to help. They may be a little further along in the journey. So I want you to not forget that they are out there and that they can give you help. I have a caregiver group online, on [Facebook](#) that you can google or search for on Facebook, you can search for caregivers for chronic kidney disease and I will also put a link in the show notes for you to see.

#3) Don't lose touch with the things that you love. Now, I know that you can get so involved in caring for someone, my daughter, when she was born, she was a preemie and she was in the hospital for nine and a half weeks and you can get so involved in that being your mission that you can forget to do some things that you really enjoy and relieve that stress. I want you to make sure that you are still doing things like checking out library books to read about new things. Even if you don't get to go to a journey, maybe you wanted to go to the Grand Canyon, check out a book about it, read about it and learn a little bit more about it, or learn a new craft. But stimulate your mind so you are not constantly just thinking about what you are doing.

One thing that I think is very good is your cooking will change. You are going to have to cook a little different food whether it is for you and the person you are caring for whether it is your spouse or your daughter or your son or you are caring for a parent, you will all the sudden need to make different food for them vs. your teenage sons who eat everything in the house then your cooking will change, you can find a book, or some recipes online and see if there are ways that you can change them based on what you have learned. You can make old favorites in a new way. In one of the podcasts in the future I will talk about ways to adjust recipes. I think that is in about a month or so, I have it planned to talk about ways to adjust your recipes. If you are trying to lower salt, get a low salt cookbook and start looking through there and find some old favorites and make some special meals. But learn a little more about what you are doing, it helps you to feel like you have control and you can do this, and you can.

#4) Talk to your patients doctor about additional support opportunities or options. You can call the insurance company and ask about the medical benefits like home health. A lot of times we don't realize and we don't ask, and the doctor doesn't offer. So you can ask, just say 'I'm having a little bit harder time, I can't leave them alone and I need to be able to go to the grocery store or whatever, is there an opportunity or can someone come out and help with bathing or anything like that?' If you need help, or if they need shots and it is a lot for you, you have a lot to take care of, just ask. All they can say is

they don't think that they have any options or that you need to go find something on your own. At least you asked and you know the answer. They can tell you at what point that you would be eligible for that care.

The other thing you can do is to consider hiring some help on your own. There is a website, like [www.care.com](http://www.care.com) where you can find skilled people to help with those types of issues. There are CNA's on there, baby sitters, nannies, housekeepers on there. If you are tired and you are having a hard time trying to keep up, you find it is all you can do to take care of the person you have responsibilities for, you might consider hiring a housekeeper to come into the house and do some of the house work, like moping the floor, sweeping, changing out the beds, all that stuff, to just help take some of the burden of you, so you don't have to do it all. Believe me, I love having a housekeeper, and it is a big stress relief. If you can afford to do it, you can talk to them and see how much it cost and what kind of things they can do to help you. Care.com does have some specialized people. Just look into it to see what options you have.

#5) If you start to see signs of stress, like anxiety or depression or trouble sleeping, loss of interest in the things you love, or worrying excessively or even a feeling of growing resentment toward your loved one, which is a sign of caregiver burnout, make sure you are getting help.

When I say help I mean, stress relief, take a break from the situation, and talk to a family member or friend who can be that quick relief. If you find yourself just feeling like it is just too much today, it has been building up and you haven't done those things to get relief, what I recommend is, you talk to them (friend or family member) ahead of time, and say hey, let's set up a code word and if I call you and I say that, then you know, I need your help, this is really important. That can help you, because probably in that moment may not want the person you are caring for to know you are struggling. You need the relief, so if you have someone that knows the code word and come over and see how you are doing and be the buffer you need, and maybe allow you to leave for a little bit. See if you can find a friend or a family member who can do that for you to help you. I am sure you probably do have a lot of people that may want to help, maybe even a church member. You just have to ask, you only get what you ask for.

That is what I wanted to share with you today. I appreciate you listening this week and thank you for listening today. I hope you will head on over to our site, all the links that I talked about today and the information at [www.renaldietHQ.com/013](http://www.renaldietHQ.com/013) and we are on lucky number thirteen!!! Next week will be fourteen, I don't have a topic yet, but I think it will be about caregivers. Have a great week and I will see you on the next podcast!!!  
Bye!

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