



# Windows of Our World

## *Patient Advisory Committee*

*Western Pacific Renal Network #17*

*Spring 2011*

### ***What is a Nephrologist?***

*by*

***Dr. Eric Tepper***



A friend once told me that the definition of a surgeon is “a darned good physician who can operate”. Similarly the definition of a Nephrologist is “a darned good physician who cares for patients with kidney problems”.

One becomes a Nephrologist after many years of study. Four years of medical school, three to four years of Internal Medicine residency and two to three years of Fellowship training in kidney diseases is the pathway to becoming a Nephrologist.

Less-than-normal kidney function affects more than 25 million Americans; one in every nine adults. Unfortunately, most people are unaware they have kidney problems. It is the responsibility of everyone in the healthcare community to identify individuals with high blood pressure, diabetes, and those with a family history of kidney problems. These people should then be screened for the presence of kidney abnormalities, and those so identified should be referred for treatment

and management. The first line of care and management is the primary care provider. The Nephrologist advises these physicians and assumes the care of those patients when kidney function declines to the point of significant damage.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a continuing process and the Nephrologists’ role is one of counselor, guide, coach and caretaker. Once a person is under the care of a Nephrologist, many things must be addressed. These include ensuring that the diagnoses are correct, managing blood pressure, regulating a healthy fluid balance, assuring that the chemical composition of the blood electrolytes (sodium, potassium, carbon dioxide, chloride) stay balanced,

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*(Dr. Tepper continued from page 1)*

and finally, monitoring bone metabolism and treating anemia. Should kidney function continue to decline, the Nephrologist prepares the individual for renal replacement therapy in the form of Peritoneal Dialysis (PD), Hemodialysis (HD) or transplant if practical.

The Nephrologist does not just treat the patient in all the aforementioned areas, there is continuing education of the patient and family. A knowledgeable patient is an effective and empowered individual who actively participates in their own health care and management. This goes a long way to ensure more positive outcomes. Additionally, patients and their families tend to be more satisfied with their overall situation, which Nephrologists realize is not always easy. Above all, the Nephrologist is an advocate for those with kidney disease. The Nephrologist manages the patient's medical care, offers emotional support and provides guidance in many arenas to patients and their families.

\*Dr. Eric Tepper is a Nephrologist with Kaiser Permanente whose office is located in Novato, California.

**Protein  
Quick  
Tip**

Keep in mind that protein-rich food naturally contains phosphorus. That's why it is very important to take your phosphate binder whenever you eat protein-rich foods (if your doctor has prescribed one for you).

**\*Breakfast Recipe**

***Aunt Betty's Blueberry Pancakes***

*Makes 12 pancakes, 2 per serving*

- 1 1/2 cups sifted plain all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons no-salt margarine, melted
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 cup canned blueberries, rinsed or 1 cup frozen, rinsed



Sift together flour, baking powder and sugar. In a mixing bowl, stir together the dry ingredients. Make a well in the center and add the remaining ingredients. Stir, starting at the center and gradually mix in the dry ingredients to make a smooth batter. Begin cooking immediately.

Heat a heavy 12-inch skillet or griddle and grease it lightly. Using a 1/3 cup measuring cup, spoon out pancakes and cook until done, flipping pancake only once.

<b>Nutrient Analysis; 2 Pancakes</b>	
Calories: 223 kcals	Phos.: 100mg
Protein: 7 g	Sodium: 196mg
Carb.: 35 g	Fiber: 2 g
Total Fat: 6g	Calcium: 142 mg
Chol.: 64 mg	Potassium: 128 mg/3.3 mEq

\*Kidney Friendly Comfort Foods—Shire, US, Inc.

## *Travels with Iris*



Yes, it's 2011 and you feel like you want to get away. I know I do. Ok, the budget requires that you stay in California. But, a weekend away or maybe a whole week is just what you need. I think I can suggest just the place to satisfy. It's my favorite short getaway place and I go every year. This beach community is located just 4 miles west of Watsonville, California. Watsonville has been an agricultural community for over 180 years.

Pajaro Dunes is situated on the shoreline of Monterey Bay. It is just south of Santa Cruz and northwest of Monterey and Carmel along Highway 1. Dialysis patients come play and pray at Pajaro Dunes where there is plenty to do or do nothing at all. Pajaro Dunes is my chosen charming and unique private beach community. Come share this tranquil, relaxing, remote and beautiful place, yet only a short drive from Sacramento or the Bay Area. Pajaro Dunes is the right atmosphere for a "dialysis patient's" retreat with family and friends. There are large homes fully furnished, 19 tennis courts, golf nearby, jogging, bicycling, fishing, body surfing, shopping, lots of talking and meditating. My choice is the homes for rent, but if you are counting pennies try out the condos or apartments available right on the beach.

If a day trip at the beach is more your choice for family fun, Sunset Beach is open for public access until 10:00 PM.

Driving time is only about 2½ hours from Northern California and I would suggest pre-planning your rest stops if needed. Each season provides some special treats for the kids, like monarch butterflies in Spring and kite flying in Fall. Great places to visit while in the area are: Monterey, Moss Landing, Carmel, Pebble Beach and 17 mile drive, all are reachable in about 45 minutes to an hour's time along beautiful Highway 1.

What I enjoy the most at Pajaro Dunes are the long walks on the beach or just watching the incredible sunrises and sunsets over the ocean. If you are daring, and I am, you allowed to have a campfire on the beach (be careful with fire). Sleeping by the roar of the ocean seems to create a very restful encounter for me. Being near the ocean stirs me to write and meditate. What will the ocean inspire you to do? Plan ahead and come find out!

Please email me your travel adventures:

[H2oFrontCL@aol.com](mailto:H2oFrontCL@aol.com)

Iris A.B. Barnett, BS, MS

Iris is a member of Network #17 PAC



## 19 Tips for Staying Positive

1. Tell your loved ones you love them at least once a day.
2. Smile often.
3. Call up friends or take them to lunch.
4. Ask for forgiveness and extend forgiveness.
5. Put yesterday behind you.
6. Avoid negative people when possible.
7. Listen to upbeat music, radio and television.
8. Don't let anyone rain on your parade.
9. Believe in miracles and fairy tales.
10. Renew yourself 30-40 minutes everyday (walking, exercising, reading).
11. Commit to resolving conflicts with those with whom you have differences.
12. Compliment someone everyday.
13. Hug your loved ones.
14. Give money to a beggar without resentment. That person's heart beats just like yours.
15. Always go the extra-mile. Be a giver not a taker. Givers are the happiest.
16. Seek win-win solutions.
17. Seek first to understand and then to be understood.  
(St. Francis of Assisi)
18. Read books.
19. Be kind. Everyone is fighting a hard battle. Remember suffering is inevitable, but misery is a choice.



### **Treasure each day.....**

Some days you'll become weary. When that happens, rest for a while, but not too long, and then get back on track with a renewed sense of purpose.

## *Conversations with Diane*

### *Change “Ain’t” So Good!*

People say going on dialysis has affected how they see themselves, their relationships, and their lifestyles. We all want our family and friends to care about us as we care about them. We want to believe we have not changed at all. I think we have and sometimes they have changed, too.

I am not entirely the same person. I don't seem to have the spunk to go out a lot. Some say that the day of dialysis they get frustrated. They just don't want to go. One lady commented that she got all ready to go and realized she didn't have dialysis that day. She was elated and happy.

I have noticed that there are people who start to shy away from us. Recognizing one's own human frailty and vulnerability is an uncomfortable reality. It has an effect on our interactions and surely can make those we know more aware of their own fears.

We express time differently. Where we were once spontaneous, we are more cautious. There seems to be a higher degree of separateness that has crept in as we may be feeling a sense of isolation that we have never felt before. I feel perfectly normal in the midst of a dinner conversation then I realize I have my distant moments. When

friends talk about a vacation, I immediately think of the frustrations I have had trying to set up out of town dialysis and I get sad.

I don't usually voice my frustrations with friends. Many of us are just quiet about our needs. We are afraid to be burdensome. Maybe it would help to tell our loved ones that sometimes we feel a little emotionally isolated.

Yes, I have changed some. Experiences change us and some changes have definitely been for the better. People in wheelchairs, with canes, in vans, and in lobbies are not invisible anymore. I appreciate it when things go well. When I am out I seem to enjoy it more and although I do not mind going to dialysis, I am much more relaxed and happy on the other days!



Diane is a member of Network #17 PAC

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*This writer is a San Francisco dialysis patient and a retired registered nurse. Ideas for discussion and any comments are welcome.*

## ***KNOW YOUR DIALYSIS OPTIONS*** **or Why I Chose Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)**

by Sarah Ellsworth, BS, MBA



Yes, despite what you may think or feel you do have options when facing kidney disease. At the time I was facing that decision, I was unaware there was a choice to be made between Hemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis. The surgeon who was preparing me to receive a fistula for Hemodialysis suggested I would be a good candidate for Peritoneal Dialysis or PD. "What's that?" I asked. After a brief explanation, I contacted a specialist and set up an appointment to learn more. Following that meeting and some serious self analysis, I decided PD was for me.

What was my thinking, you may wonder? I was 65 years old, still working a job where I was on my feet all day. I wanted to continue to work until I reached my full retirement age. I wanted and needed the freedom to set my own schedule for dialysis while working. It initially required some small accommodations on the part of my employer, but I was comfortable and desired to be responsible for my daily care.

I have now been on PD for nearly three years and was able to continue working until choosing to retire. I see my Nephrologist and nephrology nurses monthly for blood work and dietary advice. I have never felt better physically. I have energy and I'm optimistic about my new life. I am active and enjoying my newfound freedom with the help of PD.

Before making a decision about which form of dialysis is right for you, think carefully about your life style, what is important and consult with your physician to be sure you are a candidate for PD. See the comparison chart on the next page.

*\*Sarah recently retired from retailing and a long marketing management career in financial services. She is currently a member of the Patient Advisory Committee at Network #17.*



## ***Positive & Negative Comparison of Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)***



### **Positives**

- ◆ You do not experience the physical ups and downs.
- ◆ You have more freedom in your daily routine. Dialyze while you sleep.
- ◆ You are responsible for your own daily care after training.
- ◆ You can work while on dialysis.
- ◆ You can travel with your PD cycler with proper training.
- ◆ You may not have the food and fluid restrictions as with Hemodialysis.
- ◆ Less expensive than in-center Hemodialysis.
- ◆ No needles.

### **Negatives**

- ◆ You need to have a catheter surgically placed in your abdomen for exchanges.
- ◆ You have to manage the inventory and ordering of your medical supplies bi-weekly.
- ◆ You need sufficient room in your home for storage of medical supplies.
- ◆ You run the risk of infection if you do not follow antiseptic procedures.
- ◆ Some hospitals and doctors are not familiar with PD.
- ◆ Body image concerns.

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### ***Facility Locator Websites for Travel***

- ◆ [www.medicare.gov/dialysis](http://www.medicare.gov/dialysis)
- ◆ [www.globaldialysis.com](http://www.globaldialysis.com)
- ◆ [www.rsnhope.com](http://www.rsnhope.com)
- ◆ [www.dialysisunits.com](http://www.dialysisunits.com)



## *Are You Prepared for an Emergency?*

- **Know your dialysis unit emergency policy and procedures.**
- **Keep your emergency information up-to-date and with you.**
- **Know your disaster diet and review it frequently with your dietitian.**
- **Remember that your VASCULAR ACCESS is for dialysis only!**
- **Keep a current list of your medications and allergies and extra medications on hand.**
- **Prepare a home disaster kit with any emergency supplies and/or home dialysis supplies.**
- **Keep important papers and cash with you.**
- **Have a back-up plan for transportation.**
- **Be Prepared Year Round!**

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**DON'T FORGET TO MAKE A PLAN, GET A KIT, BE INFORMED**



In case of...

**Fire** — Get out, stay out. Call 911.

**Earthquake** — Drop, Cover and Hold.

**Flood** — Do not walk or drive through moving water or into flooded areas. Seek higher ground.

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