The Kidney Pandemic: What Your Doctor Isn't Telling You with Dr. Robin Rose Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Welcome

You know, like I said, the tubules which are affected first, we don't test for. There's many people who are exploring ways to do that, but that's a problem and part of why once you see the kidney labs, and I'll talk about it in a second, going down, take it seriously, even a little bit, because something's already been going on that now is showing up, but it's not new.

This is Doctor Talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most. Welcome to the Truly Healthy MD podcast. I'm Dr. Monica Harigee.

Today, I am so excited to Welcome our guest, Dr. Robin Rose, who is one of my dear friends. And we're going to talk about so many important topics. Dr.

Robin Rose has many areas of expertise when it comes to kidney health, when it comes to peptides. So welcome Dr. Robin Rose to our podcast. Thank you so much.

It's so glad to see you. Thank you. So. Robin, you join us from Hawaii. Is that correct? Absolutely. That it's amazing. So if you could tell us a little bit about your journey into integrative medicine and what brought you to how you practice medicine at this point, I think our listeners would love to hear that.

So I really, was part of the beginning of this thing we call integrative medicine. I started getting interested in healing in the 70s. And before I did any kind of medical education, I was interested in nutrition and healthy eating and exercise and dance and yoga and meditation and herbs.

Dr. Robin Rose's Integrative Medicine Journey

I lived in India and worked with a doctor in a fishing village and came back to America with this idea that this was my intended destiny in life. And first went to nursing school and I did a family nurse practitioner program.

And at that time I continued learning about nutrition, lifestyle medicine really. But I realized that I had a bigger diagnostician intention. And so I turned around and went to medical school and was really blessed to go to the University of Arizona and had Andrew Weil as a companion, as a friend, as a mentor.

And then did my family practice residency in Santa Rosa. In the interim of going to med school, I actually was very lucky to go to Sri Lanka and learn acupuncture.

And so in residency, I actually in the hospital was doing acupuncture on OB patients and, you know, was able to do, you know, we had a homeopathy clinic and we had the residents were required to maintain an herb garden.

It was pretty cool in a way that most American training doesn't really accentuate this. And so from day one, I really came into this healing practice with the idea that it's way bigger, way bigger than here's your prescription, I'll see you in X amount of months.

And I mean, part of my story is I had a spouse who died while I was in medical school and it was intense. I mean, I still might have some PTSD. I mean, it was very intense moments for me, but I learned a lot.

I saw the bigger picture and saw the depth of grief. and the potency of emotions. Yeah. So that was part of my medical education and my practice was in Ashland, Oregon.

And I was blessed to have patients who were motivated to make changes. And so my story is, you know, I, I moved along decades into my practice and ended up, well, actually I was embezzled.

that leads to stress really can make you sick. Long and short of it, I ended up with a kidney cancer. It's just like, what? It was very clear. You had kidney cancer?

Yeah, that was 2013. OK. It wasn't long ago. And I was very clear. It was like, I want to do an afrectomy. I want this out. And, you know, the conversation in the kidney world is no problem.

You can live with one kidney. Well, three months post-op, I had basically my kidney function was 25%. Oh, and I was getting very, very little. real support from anywhere.

I was shocked. I mean, and what I realized is even me, experienced primary care doc, I really didn't have that much wisdom. You know, very, very, very basic.

I found a naturopath whose practice is only kidney, Jenna Henderson, who really bailed me out, got me going. And then I just started doing my own research, sitting here in this beautiful place that I live, and looking up, OK, what about potassium?

My potassium's elevated. They're telling me, don't worry about it. Well, but I'm dropping things. I can't think clearly. I just kept going. I had a lot of abnormals, started figuring it out, got my function way up.

with the idea that low-hanging fruit lifestyle matters. I thought I had a healthy diet, but for kidney there is a lot of rules that can help prevent decline.

I mean the cool thing to know, it's not so cool, is we really have a pandemic of kidney. It's huge. And unfortunately, we have this number, glomerular filtration rate, GFR.

And at 60 or above, normal. But it isn't normal. And so it's staged. Stage one, pretty much don't eat stupid and make sure you sleep and exercise. I mean, all that avoid toxins.

Careful. Stage two is already terrible things going on, but they're subtle. And mostly conventional doctors don't even think about this stuff. The heavy metals are affecting the tubules.

Toxins are very likely to harm. Endothelial damage, the lining of blood vessels are declining. Mitochondria, the little energy production on the tubules is going down.

And that's ignored until there's 50% loss. Yeah, it's just like, wait a minute, this is crazy. So I basically have become sort of the new voice of kidney.

And I renamed this early kidney care Rhinology. Now remember, the first thing people think of me, oh, are you on dialysis? Do you have kidney failure?

Yeah, I don't do failure. Yeah, that's when it's way too late. But Let's talk about the population out there. So I call this Rhinology, the art and the clinical art and science of kidney success.

Amazing. And it really changes as soon as you hear that. It's so cool to realize the innate healing wants to get better. So OK, it's up to me. Am I going to eat stupid stuff?

Am I going to eat too much salt, too much protein, drink a soda, eat sugar? Okay, gee, doc, I don't feel good. Okay, it's, you know, it's really self love.

Can I love myself enough? to really do the things that I know. There isn't cheating. I mean, I'm a grownup. It's not a game. You know, it's like, so I, you know, there's a big thing, you know, be a kidney warrior.

And I was like, I want to be a kidney peacenik. You know, I want all of this aggravation, all the inflammation and oxidative damage that kidney causes to calm down, you know?

And so it's, I had to retrain my way of sleeping. I had to retrain my way of drinking. If you like this discussion, please hit the subscribe button and consider leaving us a review.

It really helps people find us and we truly appreciate your support. Yeah, absolutely. Going back to the very basics, I think a lot of us take our kidneys for granted.

We're like, okay, I'll drink water and I'll breathe and I will let my kidneys decide how much to filter out of my toxins and pee out and regulate my pH balance.

Kidney Cancer and Personal Kidney Decline

I have absolutely no idea what's going on, right? Yeah, nobody does. Yeah, so the kidneys are very, play so many roles past just making urine. People think are like, oh, can you just make urine, right?

But there are so many other things that the kidneys do. So what are those other roles that the kidneys do apart from just making urine? You know, I mentioned a few of them.

I mean, endothelial damage, down the road means heart attacks and strokes. So they're very much integrated with our whole cardiovascular system. Absolutely.

If the kidney is not healthy, our cardiovascular system is not going to be healthy. There's these vicious cycles and somewhere we need to step in. And like I said, I mean, I call it the low-hanging fruit.

The other thing is the gut kidney relationship is enormous. Things that, quote, normal kidney people can handle that become toxins for people whose kidneys are in decline, even a little.

And if you look at the labs, greater than 60 is normal. No, it isn't. Then all of a sudden, this kidney pandemic is even bigger than we thought. And so those of us who like to think in terms of health and wellness, can find a lot of ways to help this stuff.

I mean, it affects the eyes, it affects the hearing, it affects the brain. The oral hygiene has a relationship with kidney. Periodontal disease and kidney are way more likely to happen.

The liver and the kidney work together as detox organs, the guts, the muscles, the bones. I mean, it's really, I've come to think of kidney as a root cause, because it influences all the other cells.

Yeah, absolutely. If the kidney's not working, none of the other organs are going to do what we need them to do. And it's a gradual decline. So sometimes it doesn't seem like much is happening until it's too late.

And what I've found is I've been able to help people reverse damage. The kidney's made up of these little units called nephrons. And when they get injured, they're not working well, they're sick, but they're not dead yet.

And so there's so much we can do to resuscitate those and, and allow them to recover and to skip ahead that when I found peptides, that was the most amazing thing.

And the bioregulator peptides are these tiny little amazing healing supplements that were devised in Russia. And for me, it felt like I had our new lease on life.

A lot of what was just sluggish, was fatigued, was not really engaging, repaired. It's really stunning. And so that's kind of the end of the line. The first thing is knowing that the food supply is full of nasty chemicals.

Eat organic. It really does matter. And things like glyphosate and all the pesticides that are in the foods, they affect

kidney. The kidney tubules are so precious.

They're responsible for accepting or rejecting stuff. when they don't do that properly, stuff that we're supposed to keep, they throw out and stuff they're supposed to throw out, you know, then the downstream is what gets messed up.

You know, yeah, you're either making too much pee, not enough pee, but what's so what? And the so what is, you know, 100 conversations. And each person has a few different things that they show up with.

So doing lab work really helps. Just the conventional regular labs are amazing. I mean, one of the things that I found out long into it, not soon enough as far as I'm concerned, was to alkalinize.

And with diet, you can alkalinize with less animal foods and more plant proteins. Exercise helps. Good sleep helps. Taking bicarbonate helps. You know, baking soda actually is an amazing tool for kidney because most people who have kidney decline are getting acidotic.

It may be subtle at first, but it interferes with things like uric acid starts going up. That causes gout, causes inflammation in the joints and the muscles and, and parathyroid can go more things.

Yeah. It causes cardiovascular disease and. Yeah. It's very inflammatory everywhere else. And a little bicarb and, gee, funny thing, you know, the body chemistry decides it can do what it's supposed to.

I mean, there's so many easy, sweet, sweet things. I mean, the other one that I discovered was arugula is a huge tool for maintaining nitric oxide that helps our blood vessels.

To be honest, I didn't like it before. Like, you know what? I'm going to like this stuff. I grow it. I eat it every day in my salad. It's amazing. So there's so much we can do.

And that's really the message to keep telling your body is, I can and I will. I can do this. If you're a woman in your 40s to 70s, you've probably been told that it's just aging.

But what if it's not? At TrulyHealthyMD.com, we look deeper. Hormones, nervous system health, hidden toxicities. You're not broken. You just need a doctor who really listens.

Understanding Early Kidney Disease and Lab Markers

Visit TrulyHealthyMD.com and book a consultation today. It's time to feel like your real self again. Absolutely, that those are all things that I think are amazing messages to break it down a little bit more simply for people who may have gotten a blood chemistry test and it looks like all the numbers are okay.

How would you explain the different stages of kidney disease to somebody that says, okay, well, my PCP says I'm okay, but my EGFR is in a certain rage.

It's not flagging as abnormal, but. Could I have problems? Yes, no. How would you? And that's to me, that's the early bird time to start. It's like, it's not about taking a drug.

And that's why many doctors don't have, okay, I'm gonna write your prescription next. That's just not the only way. And so we start doing self-reflection.

Am I eating right? Am I eating too much sugar? I mean, I gave up sugar I stopped eating meat at a certain point and my function probably jumped up 10 points.

That's not for everybody. You got to know what you're doing, but you don't need to eat meat three times a day. Monitoring with chronometer.com. It's a free app online.

That's so helpful because nobody really knows what they're getting. How much magnesium is in your diet? You don't really know how much selenium, how much anything, you know?

And so I really recommend that figuring out, am I hydrating well? You know, have I become chronically dehydrated? That impacts. Looking at the toxins in your world and in your life.

I mean, I call this renal detoxicology. Start looking at your mind. Am I stuck in negative thoughts. Am I stuck in fear, anger, grief? Those are things to work on.

Then toxic relationships. How am I relating to other people? How are they relating to me? How am I reacting? One of the things that's really interesting to know is when you start having kidney decline, sympathetic nervous system becomes more intense.

That means the stress hormones aren't getting broken down and peed out. It doesn't feel good. It's like, where's the trouble? I feel agitated all the time.

So I decided that coffee isn't a great idea for kidney, even though there's some that are saying, well, it's such a good antioxidant. I'm going to do a blog post on coffee soon, because it's such a part of our culture.

And yet, You know, I used to say I had a cup of coffee welded to my hand. Now I have tea in my cup. And you know, fast food is not good for you unless it's the stuff you made yesterday and you can eat up again.

The packaged products that we call food, bad idea. You know, it really forced me to engage in the kitchen. Man, if I want to eat something, I'm going to make it easy for me to say because my work life is way more flexible than it used to be.

But even when I worked. And this was before kidney. Those were in the days of the crockpots. I always had something cooking in my crockpot. My office, by the way, was a home office.

So you could smell my lentil soup cooking in the waiting room. People would say, man, I'm hungry. What are you making in there? Looking at your sleep habits, it's easier to change this stuff before you get really sick.

You know, as kidney progresses, it's harder to make changes, you know, feel good. Am I exercising or am I saying I'm exercising and not really doing it?

You know, again, the toxin thing, look under your bathroom sink, look under your kitchen sink, look in your garage, look at your cosmetics. You know, I mean, there's a lot of things that we can do that can be healthier and that's all everybody can do that you know you don't have to even have kidney decline to want to do this and we all have kidneys to take care of once and the other thing that's interesting is there's this idea that kidney absolutely will decline with aging that's the you know the party line My husband, who's a couple of years younger than me, has a GFR of 100 and he's 70. So it's not really true.

And I was in a conversation with a nephrologist and Joe Pezzorno, the naturopath who talks a lot about toxins. And what he said was so moving to me because basically what he said was that As we age, we're exposed to toxins longer.

And so it's not aging, it's exposure to toxins that causes the decline in our organs, especially kidneys and, and so, you know, I can't say it enough times it's like really.

honest exploration of what can I get rid of. I mean looking at labels in your supplements sometimes there's nasty stuff in our meds and I even personally I compound like I do take a high blood pressure medicine.

I have low blood pressure until many years of kidney, before I figured some of this stuff out, there's some damage. I have it compounded because I don't want titanium dioxide in my pills and the compounder doesn't do that.

So there's just, you kind of have to be fierce about wanting to get better. You got to mean it. Yeah, you have to be your own advocate for sure. And I call that self-love.

Yeah, yeah, definitely. And so going back to the basics, if somebody out there is listening to this and they're like, I don't know if I have kids or not.

My primary care doctor has not said anything. What are the things that they need to look at in their labs? Uh, can you explain the. basics of kidney function.

Yeah you know like I said the tubules which are affected first we don't test for. There's many people who are exploring ways to do that but that that's a problem and part of why once you see the kidney labs, and I'll talk about it in a second, going down, take it seriously, even a little bit, because something's already been going on that now is showing up, but it's not new.

And so when you see the chemistry panel that's done almost every time you go see anybody, you see creatinine. Creatinine is something that we consider a uremic toxin, and it's a marker to say something's going on with kidney.

You should be able to excrete it. There's exceptions. Very bulky people with big muscles may have elevated creatinine, but their kidneys are fine. For most people, if you start seeing creatinine creeping up, okay, maybe I need to pay attention to this.

It doesn't mean I need to sign up for dialysis. That could be decades down the line, if ever. So, you know, there's that and then GFR. Blemarular filtration rate is another one.

And these days, it doesn't quite, well, it used to be that greater than 60 was just greater than 60 without a number. And when I started going, well, what if it's 61? That's not that much different from 58. And what?

We don't think about that. And so it's good to know what in particular that is.

Lifestyle, Diet, and Detox Strategies for Kidney Health

You get a urinalysis. You want to look, is there protein in your urine? Is there blood in your urine? Is your urine too concentrated? Is it too acidic?

Those are all things that say kidney awareness. And for what it's worth, I mean, kidney is a romantic, amazing organ. To the Chinese, it's like generativity.

It's how we reproduce in the world. many, many times in the Bible as the basic heart and soul and the body. And so it's really an organ of discernment.

It decides what to keep and what to get rid of. And so I look at it as I need to have discernment in my life, what's OK and what isn't. You know, so those, those kinds of things that's free, you know, you, you, you, you don't have to pay to do some self evaluation.

It's really just, again, self love. Am I, am I going to care enough? Oh, I'm too busy. Okay. Well, you won't be too busy if you're, if you're sick and you don't have a choice, you know, it's, it's really about choosing well.

Yeah, absolutely. And. There's so many things in health that are completely free. We can think about a lot of tests that are very expensive, but if we think about the basic things, they're all free.

You know, even when I was my sickest, I'd lay on the bed and do leg lifts slowly with breath. You know, breath work helps with the acidosis. It's worth it.

You know, walking. You don't have to be a super athlete. Muscle decline is a real problem for everybody. And with kidney, it can be even more so. You know, use heavy books if you don't have anything else, you know?

I mean, dancing is exercise. Put on music and be a 17-year-old, you know? And there's ways to do this, you know? And our culture is changing. I think, you know, we're starting to look at the chemicals in our food and the way we teach our children to stay healthy.

Yeah, absolutely. So for my own self-promotion, I'm going to share this. This is my newly one-week-old book. I spent a lot of time researching. I have piles of notebooks that I didn't organize and finally was like, I should share this.

Yeah, talk about that. And so basically this book, another use for it is weightlifting. If nothing else, if nothing else, yes. If nothing else, short of 800 pages, it's a lot of information.

I made the print big because I was doing a lot of it before I had cataract surgery, so I could see it. So it's easy to read. Basically, I discovered after doing all these things I'm talking about, I mean, I was like, absolutely.

I'm, you know, I'll do it because I was given, essentially I say, they put again to my head and said, don't be surprised if you lose 5% a year. And I wasn't 25%. It's like, wow, I had to really get fierce, you know, la la la la la.

I'm going to go get better. And. Eventually, I discovered peptides and then I discovered the bioregulators, which is what I focus on with this book because they're very safe.

The Russians basically started this research and it's continuing around the world at this point. They're tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny little pieces of proteins.

So, you know, a protein is this long, wound up thing. A peptide is just a piece of that, and a bioregulator is a tinier piece. And the cool thing about them is they're so small, they get into the cell, get into the nucleus, and then, you know, DNA is this way.

They lodge in DNA and reverse epigenetic damage, which means that the injuries from being alive that dent, injure our DNA, can actually be reversed. And when I heard that, it was just like, you know, my hair went up.

I was just like, I want to know about this. And so I've done many years dive into this to find out, OK, I'm going to look at these through the lens of kidney.

because that's my focus right now. And they're amazing. And so it gave me a sense, OK, there's a kidney bioregulator, pylotax. It's amazing. I think it saved my life.

But also, there's a brain bioregulator. The kidney relates to brain in ways that's kind of alarming. You know, when I was the sickest, I think clearly.

The things that, you know, and I talked to Dr. Kat Toops, who's doing what I'm doing, but with the brain in a lot of ways and the things that harm kidney harm the brain.

So a brain bioregulator is going to be helping. The stomach is affected. There's gastroparesis. It means the stomach isn't doing its pulsations. Okay.

You know, The parathyroid, as we've said, parathyroid is affected by kidney decline. There's a parathyroid bioregulator that helps with the calcium and phosphorus balance.

Electrolytes are also worth looking at on your panels, but sometimes it's not real clear that it's kidney. You know, there's muscle, there's bone, there's bone marrow, there's eyes.

You know, and so I, I basically have found a way, and this is the cherry on top of doing all this lifestyle stuff. You know, you can't just take these and eat bad and stay up all night and not drink water.

You know, I mean, it just doesn't do that. It doesn't work that way. You know, don't we all wish, you know, give me

some more. I know there's no magic pills out there.

There really isn't. And I mean, I'm the magic pill. You're the magic pill where we are where that magic pill. And then we can, you know, decorate with some of these things to make it really work.

And so This bioregulator odyssey has been really lovely. And again, I combine it with good diet and herbs, herbs that are either in the diet or in my cup of tea, sometimes in tinctures.

So many supplements, vitamins that… I actually like the testing, like NutriEval. It's this enormous test of so many results. The first time I did it, I think it took six months to research everything.

So many things wrong with me. And so now I know that stuff. There's quirky things that go wrong with kidney. Things that you'd think Well, so what, you know, Simon can't get into cells as easily.

So you want to make sure you have enough of it so that what can get in does, you know, transporters is like cells have have receptors that are complicated.

themselves and then there's there's like molecules that say oh okay they're escort service oh you want to get in the cell okay come on this way well if the escort service is broken stuff that the cells need to thrive they can't get it.

And, and so, you know, this, this tool to have some repair is really exciting because, you know, truly as we age, things do decline epigenetics, this environmental and emotional and infectious hit on the way our bodies work can be reversed.

And that's, that's the success. And so who is this book for? Is it for Medical professionals, is it for the general public?

Peptides, Bioregulators, and the Renology Book

Who is the book for? You know, I didn't water it down. So it really is more for the educated lay people. who are willing to look stuff up. I did. I started reading the medical stuff.

I was like, I don't remember some of this stuff. And so you have to be willing to want to study. And even the medical professionals for whom this, God willing, will be an incredible help will have to look stuff up.

I think, I mean, unless everybody's like way more brilliant than I am, but I don't think so. I mean, I was shocked. Really incredibly educated physicians, people who I'd looked up to for years were clueless about kidney.

And that's like, well, what do I do? And people are like, I don't know, just do your best. Or don't worry, people live a long time with this. Thanks, I'm glad to know that.

But what about the ones who don't, you know, and I don't feel good. So what do you have to offer, you know, so it's really me saying, I needed a book to guide myself.

And now I've shared it. That's amazing. We're so glad to have this information out there. And so where can people find this book? I decided to self-publish so I could basically have the freedom to say it the way I wanted.

And so I have a website that's just new. I'm new to this. I'm still learning how to drive it. Renology, that's R-E-N-O-L-O-G-Y. Renology is kidney success.

And I'm putting blog posts and there's a bunch of podcasts and some videos. And, you know, I have a couple of sections, my kidney kitchen, which I'm going to start embellishing with thoughts, because the kidney kitchen is the lab for success, my kidney garden, because I'm a gardener and I walked around my yard one day and wrote a long list of the plants that are actually kidney friends.

And so I'm slowly looking that up. I did one on cardamom. I planted cardamom. I live in Hawaii. It's a ginger plant. And cardamom is amazing medicine.

I put a quarter teaspoon in my tea nowadays. And you can read it. It's a blog post on my website. And it's amazing. I mean, I didn't know all this about cardamom.

I like the taste of it. It's great. It's really useful. And there's been studies that show it benefiting issues that harm kidney. And so there's so many things like that.

Turmeric, ginger, arugula. You know, the other thing that I didn't mention is caution with oils. It's becoming a conversation, but you know, all the, you know, I'm old enough.

I remember when my wife, oh, we have safflower oil and it's going to save your life, you know, and now we know it inflames your body and deteriorates your, your major organs, et cetera.

And so, you know, There are some people who say don't use any oil in your cooking. I'm not there. I use some olive oil and avocado oil. I use ghee for things.

I had some professional guests who were all alarmed that I was cooking with olive oil. And so that week I used the ghee to cook with. There's so many things to do.

You don't have to do them all. Yeah, sure. It's crazy making. But, you know, over time, it's like, I had to work on my sleep. I like staying up late. Bad.

Bad for you. There's, you know, there's melatonin. Melatonin helps kidney. It's not just a sleep thing. It's an immune system support. Like there's a bioregulator peptide called epitalin that is from the pineal gland and it helps the body actually make its own melatonin.

And so, you know, there's a lot of ways to just recoup our losses. Yeah, absolutely. This is just an amazing conversation for everybody out there, especially people with any type of kidney disease, people who are interested in peptides.

Unfortunately, we have to finish this conversation at some point, but For those people out there that are listening, what would you say are the key takeaways?

I know this is like a lot of stuff for people to digest. What are the main things that you want people to know? Well, first thing I keep saying is self-love.

Work on the negative talk in your head. Who told you you weren't good enough? Change that. You know, that's kind of my merger about that. And that includes self-explore.

You know, if you can look at your labs and see that there's a little decline, take it seriously. You know, it's not like, oh my God, no, it's like, driving and I'm going a little bit to this side, I'm gonna go back and be on the road.

Look at the diet. I mean, if we're honest with ourselves, we know what we're doing, you know, like, all right, I'm drinking soda. Okay, it's only when I'm no more.

Yeah, you know, so that stuff, you know, I think Tune up your sleep. Tune out your exercise. Tune up relationships. If people are being staltive, insulting, or obnoxious to you, deal with it.

Don't accept harm. And, you know, check out my website. There's a way to contact me. You know, I'm pretty chatty as an emailer and, you know, hopefully I can share enough information that people can get help.

And hopefully there are more and more doctors who can have this conversation and personalized. Yeah. Well, we'll have that website on our show notes and thank you so much for being here, Dr.

Robin Rose. Thank you. It's a joy and a pleasure to realize that some of the things we're told can actually it's shifted to a more positive thing. So let's all focus on kidney success.

Absolutely. Thank you so much. Thank you for tuning into Dr. Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

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