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Ask the Naturopath: Dissolving Kidney Stones

I had to laugh when a wife recently displayed little sympathy for her husband in the middle of passing kidney stones for yet another season. Mind you, I wasn't laughing at him or his pain: just at her analogy that passing a small stone was little in comparison to the passing of their 10-pound child (referred to by her as a watermelon) during childbirth. He clearly had not shown enough sympathy for her several years ago. Maybe, her frustration comes from the fact that we go through this little song and dance with him every Fall. Yet, he still does not make the lifestyle changes that could prevent the yearly return of these painful stones. For one who studies the patterns of the seasons, the Fall is a clean-out time to flush the kidneys in preparation for the winter season when fewer fruits and vegetables are available.

These stones, which could be better described as spurs, go through the 1/8 inch diameter ureter tubes all the way down our back into the bladder and then out the urethra, which is a slightly easier task for the ladies than for the men with their tender male parts. This may be why the wife of this dear man had a slight smirk on her face as she happily announced it was his choice to keep drinking the sodas and coffee that contribute to the formation of these spurs.

We turned to our favorite herbal remedies to dissolve the problem, reminding him of the changes he could make to avoid this condition in the future.

One of the simplest ways to prevent kidney stones is proper hydration of the body. Your kidneys are filters that clean your entire bloodstream 60-plus times per day. That's your entire bloodstream every 25 minutes through these two tiny fist-sized filters; how amazing! Only about one-thousandth of the filtered material becomes urine. Yet, for many, the lack of water keeps these essential filters from staying spongy, pliable, and clean! Previously used and unusable minerals like calcium build up into these painful spurs. When the body moves them out of the kidneys, it is very painful.

So, how much water should you drink? Consider how much you weigh; now, cut that number in half, and that is the number of ounces you could consume for a normal healthy body. So, if you weigh 200 pounds, that's 100 ounces of water per day. If you weigh 150 pounds, that's 75 ounces per day. There are a few other things to keep in mind. Plain water tends not to be absorbed, so add the fresh juice of a lemon or lime, or consider adding a tablespoon of concentrated cherry juice, or one of my favorites, chlorophyll. Our chlorophyll comes from pressed alfalfa flavored with spearmint. Chlorophyll in your water gives you a great supply of minerals, is healthy for your bowels, and improves energy. Tea also counts toward your total ounces, but herbal teas are preferred. You can only absorb 3 oz. of water at a time, so sipping it all day long is preferred. Keep your water in glass, hard plastic, or stainless steel containers to avoid toxins from the general plastic water bottles.

Many people think this is a lot of water, but remember, a gallon is 128 oz., not 64 oz. You can do this; it takes time to rehydrate a dry sponge, but after a few weeks, you will not need to urinate as frequently.

Lemons are great in the water for kidney stones. They help to balance the pH of the body, leaving it in a more alkaline state which helps to dissolve stones. Hydrangea is a great herb, as it has traditionally been used to dissolve both kidney and gallbladder stones. This is the one we use the most at Herbs Etc. followed by Stone root. They both contain alkalizing minerals that help to bring minerals back into proper solution and to dissolve hard mineral deposits anywhere in the body, especially the joints.

Some people have amino acid deficiencies involved, especially if the problem is said to be genetic; these are best found with the help of a knowledgeable Naturopath. Two ladies in the last few years have presented with this exact condition and have since stopped suffering from stones after a good nutrition program was followed.

Finally, getting back to our gentleman friend...avoid carbonated and acidic drinks like coffee. They are hard on the kidneys and contribute to the pH imbalance that can lead to stones. Let's drink our water with lemon, consider herbs like Hydrangea from a good herb shop, and stop consuming over-acid foods and drinks, especially coffee and pop. Then, we can enjoy the beautiful Fall without extreme pain and unsympathetic smirks from those who know better. So, baby watermelon, I hope your parents are doing better and that you know you are one sweet melon.