

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/clinicians-roundtable/potassium-restriction-ckd-management/54816/>

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Rethinking Potassium Restriction in Chronic Kidney Disease Management

Announcer:

You're listening to *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Deborah Clegg, who's the Vice President for Research and a Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso, as well as a Dietitian. She'll be discussing the importance of reevaluating dietary potassium restriction in patients with chronic kidney disease. Here's Dr. Clegg now.

Dr. Clegg:

We typically put a patient who has a reduced kidney function on a low potassium diet. But what's so incredibly important to understand is that we are already all consuming a low potassium diet. When you look at the dietary recommendations for potassium, it's around 4,000 milligrams or milliequivalents of potassium per day; that's the recommendation for all of us to consume. But in actuality, we're already consuming a low potassium diet. The average American consumer is consuming about 2,000 milligrams or milliequivalents of potassium a day, which is exactly what we recommend for an individual who has reduced kidney function.

So why I am emphasizing this point is I think that we first have to address how much potassium that individual is actually consuming. I think we confuse them by stamping on, 'okay, you have a reduction in kidney function; therefore, we have to give you a low potassium diet.' But they might already be consuming a low potassium diet. So rather than just telling them, 'no, don't eat these foods,' I think we need to have a better assessment of what they're actually eating to begin with to even understand whether they need to be on a potassium-restricted diet or if they're already consuming one.

Also, I think that there's a lot of new research that's coming out or that is also needed that can give us more information about how we can actually help improve the health of individuals and what the role of plant-forward diets might be. And also, I think we need to have more guidelines and updates to balance their hyperkalemia risk with their overall nutritional and cardiovascular health.

Again, why I am emphasizing this is that we know that the very foods that we tell people to reduce their consumption of are actually heart healthy and kidney healthy. So I think we need to be able to begin to understand the importance of having a fine balance. Let's help these patients enrich their lives by consuming fresh fruits and vegetables and still monitor their hyperkalemia risk.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Deborah Clegg explaining why it might be time to reevaluate dietary potassium restriction in patients with chronic kidney disease. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!