

# Healthcare is selfcare.

## THE PODCAST



### Transcript - Episode 1: Don't Skip a Beat

**Aloysius Ballard** *Host*      **Ediz Tasan, MD, MBA, FACC, FSCAI** *Interventional Cardiologist*

**Ballard:** If there's one thing we've learned it's that taking care of ourselves is key. And there are a lot of ways to do that. Selfcare has come to mean taking time for the things that make us happy, for the things that make us feel good, and for the things that keep us healthy. Healthcare is Selfcare Podcast presented by Singer River Health System focuses on candid conversations with medical professionals aimed at improving health and saving lives. So sit back, grab a cup of coffee, and prioritize you.

Welcome to Healthcare is Selfcare Podcast—and I am today's host, Aloysius Ballard. I am the Digital Coordinator here at Singer River Health System, and I have a great guest today. Go ahead and introduce yourself.

**Tasan:** Hi, my name is Dr. Ediz Tasan, I'm one of the cardiologists here in the community.

**Ballard:** So I know primarily you are a co-director of our Structural Heart program. Can you tell us a little bit about what that program consists of?

**Tasan:** That program basically consists of cutting-edge technology that basically can take care of some pretty serious cardiac conditions in a less-invasive manner compared to traditional methods. And for some people, it makes sense to pursue that route because of their inherently increased risk of complications with some of the more traditional surgical options.

**Ballard:** So for someone listening today, I want to make sure, we are being very clear on certain things when it comes to the heart. Let's just talk about the basics of some of this. The heart is complicated in a way because it literally has to

send blood throughout our entire body. But a lot of times there are complications that can lead to like high blood pressure, clotting and different things that affect our hearts. What are some of the common things that you come across that lead to heart disease?

**Tasan:** Basically, the most common reasons for heart disease are untreated high blood pressure, very poor cholesterols, one of the main issues that we have down here is smoking. Smoking is a huge contributor to advanced heart disease and diabetes. Which kind of ties into diet.

**Ballard:** So diet. We know in the South we like to eat our fried chicken, our buttery foods and things of that nature. A lot of times people have the question that, "Oh, man, you know, my family, everybody's overweight or we've been carrying this for a while and they're still healthy." So how is it that you can carry a lot or eat unhealthy for a while and never see any consequence?

**Tasan:** Well, for cardiac conditions, a lot of it is genetic. There's a genetic component and there is, basically, a lifestyle component. Some people are blessed with better genetics and they can get away with inherently increased cholesterols. And they don't have, you know, plaque deposition inside the arteries of their heart. And a lot of times, certain ethnicities actually have some inherent protection and some ethnicities actually can lead to increased or early onset heart disease as well.

**Ballard:** So with that being said, you mentioned earlier about some cutting-edge technology that the Structural Heart program is involved with.

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I know that you guys have some low invasive ways of repairing the heart. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Tasan:** Yeah, probably our flagship structural heart procedure would be the TAVR, which stands for Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement, which is basically replacing the heart valve through the leg. Or when I say the leg, I mean the groin area through the femoral artery. Which became pretty much standard care for certain kinds of people, where traditionally, the only option would be open heart surgery, which would be basically an incision in the chest and opening up of the body.

**Ballard:** So with the TAVR procedure, because I've been documenting some of these stories and testimonials, where a lot of our guests say they were doing normal stuff and then all of a sudden they couldn't breathe or regular tasks seem daunting. A lot of times we can overlook those things.

**Tasan:** That's right.

**Ballard:** What do you say to someone who may be listening and getting nervous because now they realize that they may have a heart issue. Is it something to be overly concerned with or should they just come see you guys? Like, what are the steps before you get to it?

**Tasan:** Well, the most common thing that we see, you know, there's different ways people approach a cardiologist, you know, specifically when it comes to the aortic valve.

Classically, people just get increased shortness of breath and fatigue with exertion. A classic thing will be somebody is in their early seventies and they used to walk, I don't know, three miles a day. And then over the last year, they're only able to walk a half a mile a day and they're very short of breath or fatigued. They chalk it up to age and they say, but that's a pretty big drop off. So any time you're able to do something on a

regular basis and over a couple of months, that activity function is decreased by anywhere from 50% or more. That should be an alarm flag that something is not going right.

Now obviously in your forties, you're going to be way different in your seventies than your forties. But one of the most common things that we come across is people accept their new shortness of breath and fatigue as aging when sometimes it's from a pretty serious underlying heart condition, which is if you do have severe aortic valve stenosis or a bad valve that's giving you symptoms. Your mortality rate is very high, it's around 50% on certain studies in one year and up to 60% in two years. So there is a real there is a real risk of ignoring your symptoms because you do have a chance of passing away in a sudden manner.

**Ballard:** Now, with the procedures that you guys perform, what are the recovery periods?

**Tasan:** Our recovery periods are remarkable. You know, the majority of our cases that undergo a valve replacement, through the leg of the aortic valve specifically, go home the next day. We do have you know, there are some circumstances where they can stay a couple of days, but for the most part, I mean, the majority, I'm talking 90% or more, are leaving the next day. And then if they don't leave the next day, two days.

**Ballard:** So do you agree with the notion that it's better to catch it early? So maybe just at what age? And I guess that's where I'm leading to at what age should you start to schedule more screenings for your heart?

**Tasan:** It's different for everybody. I would say anybody that has a family member who suffered from a heart attack or needed open heart surgery before the age of 60, it's a very good idea to get into a cardiologist or even a healthcare provider in their early forties because there's a lot of underlying conditions like genetic reasons

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for abnormally elevated cholesterols or early coronary artery disease that can be screened for with things that we do here at the hospital, like calcium scores and fasting lipid profiles that we could catch, or with the right trained physician going to the see the right person, they can catch someone that is going to have a concern for maybe early onset heart disease. And certain medications like statins, cholesterol medicines can help prevent plaque buildup within the heart that are specifically towards the valve that just overall heart health.

**Ballard:** I got you. Now, let's stay with the healthcare is selfcare. Selfcare being that we can do certain things to improve our health. But that being said, what kind of lifestyle of eating is actually good for our heart?

**Tasan:** Well, probably the most—one of the best documented, I guess not diets, I would say lifestyle, there are basically two that I've seen people do the best on if able to do on a consistent basis. One is the Mediterranean diet, which has been shown that if you're able to lead a lifestyle majorly focusing on that kind of diet, which is, you know, more lean meats, smaller portions, a lot of vegetables and fruits, has shown to have better cardiovascular outcomes compared to some of the traditional diets that are here in the south. And the other one, which is extremely difficult to do, but very, very beneficial if you can do it, is basically plant-based diets being as close to a vegan as you can become without your life being miserable. It's a very difficult diet to do. I've actually personally tried to do it, and I have done it for about four or five months. It was the healthiest I've ever been. But it is difficult. It is especially if you're the lone wolf in a group of friends or the one in the family. It's a very tough thing to do. And especially in this area, there are not as many options as there are in other places in the country which make it accessible to be plant-based. But the plant-based

diet and when I mean plant based doesn't mean vegan, it's eliminating as many animal proteins or things made from animals as possible, when you have the option. Or a Mediterranean diet—really does have prolonged and significant positive outcomes for your cardiovascular health.

**Ballard:** And I'm sure oatmeal is something that we should always include, and when I mean oatmeal, I'm talking the raw form, just not all the sugar is the problem.

**Tasan:** It's carbohydrates. That's a different subject. But carbohydrates are not necessarily bad for you. Now, if you're a type one diabetic, that's a little bit different. But the problem is, when you couple a carbohydrate with animal fats, your body will always use the carbohydrate. You know, I am not a registered dietitian or nutritionist, but the carbohydrate will be used for energy first and then the fat that you're consuming will be stored and very, very calorie dense meals will be stored in your body as adipose tissues. So, the issue is not carbs, it's what's coming with them. You know, if it's three pieces of sausage, two pieces of bacon, and covered with sugar, that's where it's easy to pack on pounds. But overall, things like oatmeal, if eaten right are very, very healthy for you.

**Ballard:** Awesome. Now, let's shift a little bit. I want people to understand a little bit about who you are. Where did you grow up?

**Tasan:** Well, I was born in Galveston, grew up to about nine or ten years old in Houston. And then we relocated the majority of my youth or you know, my upbringing was in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Ballard:** Cleveland, are you a Cavaliers fan?

**Tasan:** Sure! Used to be a bigger fan when I lived there. I was a really big fan, been to a lot of games.

**Ballard:** You actually graduated from Bowling Green University.

**Tasan:** Bowling Green State, yep.

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**Ballard:** What was your time like there?

**Tasan:** Well, it was a little unique. A lot of my time in undergrad I spent on active duty with the military. So I did a lot of internet courses in the beginning, but I got some time to spend on campus towards the end. It was a great experience.

**Ballard:** How do you think the military really helped prepare you for your role in what you do now?

**Tasan:** I think it does. You know, medicine is—every field has a strong suit for it. Certain individuals can excel in different fields. And cardiology, I think having a little bit more of a regimented youth and learning some tactics to organize your life make cardiology a little bit easier for me because it is a very busy field and there's a lot of responsibility. In the military experience and knowing what it takes to be successful, especially with early mornings and seeing things through has definitely given me an edge in my career, you know?

**Ballard:** So what's the first thing you normally do when you get home from work?

**Tasan:** First thing I normally do is basically, you know, kiss and hug my wife and play with my son. He's a pretty energetic two and a half year old.

**Ballard:** So you have a two year old at the house?

**Tasan:** Oh, yeah. It's quite a treat, you know, full of energy. And sometimes it's makes me kind of wonder why I'm so tired half the time when you see him. And I don't know where he gets his energy from, but it definitely keeps me on my toes.

**Ballard:** Can you tell people how they can get in contact with you?

**Tasan:** Easiest way to get in contact with us is basically just looking up Southern Mississippi Heart Center, either through the internet or through Singing River website and just calling the number and saying that you want to be seen or evaluated or express your concerns with our staff and they'll let you know the next steps and what needs to be done.

**Ballard:** Thank you for joining us on the podcast today. We appreciate you coming to the Healthcare is Selfcare Podcast.

