



## Season 7, Special Episode

### The Lifechanging Match

#### [Teaser Clip]

##### **Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

*I'd love it if you could tell us as much as you can tell us, um, about the exciting research that your team is doing and how it is going to continue to save lives.*

##### **Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

*Yeah. We are doing special research- Mm-hmm ... in the field of liquid biopsy.*

#### [Intro Music]

##### **Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

Hi, my name is Adeola, and I'm one of the producers here at Hadassah on Call New Frontiers in Medicine. Today, we have something a little bit different for you. Usually, our show is filmed in Israel, and you see the result in the US. But today, we wanted to do something a little bit different, because in our New York offices, we have a special visitor, Dr. Abed Khalaileh. He's the director of the kidney transplant service at Hadassah Hospital Ein Kerem. He's here to talk about kidney transplants, donations, and what makes Hadassah Hospital so special and lifechanging. Stick around, and next month, we'll resume our regularly scheduled programming with our host, Maayan Hoffman. Thanks for watching and see you later.

Dr. Abed Khalaileh, thank you so much for joining us on Hadassah on Call. We're so excited to have you. Question. I want to start just by asking you, what inspired you to become a transplant doctor?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

It's an interesting issue. Actually, well, when I was a child, I was thinking of being a doctor, but I could not start my career in this field.

So I go, or I went through engineering. Engineering, it's reminded me to solve complex problems. And, it also solves very complex problems, but those problems it's related to human life. And for that, I decided to change my way from engineering to medicine. To become a transplant surgeon from the medical field, it's also big topic, because it touches complicity as well the hardcore of our life to give the chance of life. For that, I choose that.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

That's amazing. You know, when I was reading about you and just the wonderful work that you do, I read somewhere that you call Hadassah, you like to refer to Hadassah as Noah's Ark, and I thought that was a really great analogy. So I'm just wondering, why is it that you like to refer to Hadassah as Noah's Ark?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Because Noah's Ark, it used to be the base of our simple life, that it collects those people together, wife and children, as well as animals. This is very simple, to give them the way to survive. And Hadassah actually does the same job. It collects the people from every religion, ethnicity, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Druze, together. We have a great staff that work daily and at night together. So, I could not find better than this description to describe this amazing hospital.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

So what, what makes Hadassah unique?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

What makes Hadassah unique, actually, that is what I told you.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

Mm-hmm.

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

That it's bringing those different people in the same way of the river. So we go together, and we support each other in order to get just one aim. It's the best healthcare for our patients. Hadassah is unique not just for giving the best care of health. Hadassah as well do a lot of in the field research, which is the hardcore of medicine. Without doing research, we can give this best care, and we can't even advance, and we can't see the future.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

I also read, because I, I tried to do a little bit of research, a little bit more research on you before we had this conversation, and I know that in Israel there is the largest amount of, living donors. Does it still surprise you that people are so willing to donate to someone that they don't know or have never met or will never meet? Does that still surprise you?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

You know, honestly- the word surprise, it does not meet that, let's say, deep, deep idea. Because it just- it not just surprising me, it's more than a deep, because those people that they donate part of them body, organ, either is kidney or part of liver, you can't imagine how much effort they put. Because I feel that, because I do from one, from one side, I feel it's sometimes I do like a harm, because I put my knife and I do this incision over those healthy people, that they do that just to give a new chance, new life for others. And, you know, it's every time when I do that, I feel it's a mix of feeling. I feel how those people do that, and from the other side, I feel how those organs could help to recover those sick people.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

How do you think that's impacted you as a surgeon?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

It impacted me to feel those sick people, because they are suffering, because they are dying, because if they don't have hope, then they don't have a life.

Imagine your patient is waiting for a kidney. Imagine he is four hours, three times a week connecting to dialysis machine, or imagine your patient dying because he needs a new liver. So, it impacts me as a surgeon, as a human, you know, it touches the hard point in our life. We should feel, understand those patients because who knows, in one day I will be maybe there. One of my family members could be there. Then it's very important to understand that deeply

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

If you're listening to The Lifechanging Match, you'll enjoy our previous episode, Anti-Semitism in Healthcare. It's a special episode with our sister podcast, Hadassah Magazine Presents, which brings to life some of the features that our readers love. Join executive editor Lisa Hostein as she sits down with Hadassah neurosurgeon Dr. Uri Handelsberg, CEO Emeritus of the American Jewish Medical Association Michelle Stravitz, and pediatrician and co-chair of the Hadassah Physicians Council Dr. Michelle Elisburg. In this panel, they explore the growing impact of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in healthcare since October 7th, 2023.

**Dr. Michelle Elisburg:**

I look at this book, and I think, "Well, who do I give this book to?" And I ask the interpreter, you know, he's like a 25-year-old guy. I'm like, "Do, do you think that, um, a k- somebody would like this? Who should I give it to?" And he said, "Well, it depends. Is it about a good Jew or a bad Jew?" And I'm like, "Well, well, what is a good Jew? What's a bad Jew?" "Well,

**Dr. Michelle Elisburg:**

a bad Jew is a Zionist Jew, and a good Jew is not a Zion-" And so I look at him, and I'm thinking to myself, I ha- I mean, this is...

I have been to Israel, well, now four times. It's been three times to Israel since the war started. I come back, I bring Israeli chocolate to all of these people. They know I go to Israel. They know I'm Jewish. So I'm like, "Well, well, you know, I'm a Zionist Jew, so am I a bad Jew?" So that led to a conversation of, "Well, what does this, what does that mean?

What does Zionism mean to you?" I mean, it was a very open conversation, uh, but it was not one that I thought I was gonna have to have.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

Visit our podcast page at [hadassah.org/hadassahoncall](http://hadassah.org/hadassahoncall) to check out this episode or wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. And now back to The Lifechanging Match with Dr. Abed Khalaileh, director of solid organ transplantation at Hadassah Hospitals.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

So on Hadassah On Call, we like to offer our listeners maybe a little piece of advice, a look inside of what is going on within the hospitals, or what the doctor has to go through. What's one thing that you think people who have not gone through this process, or who are about to go through the transplant process should either know or don't know or need to know?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Yeah. Transplantation is a transformation, really. It's from bad, supposed to be good. And this is like a tree, and there is a flower. And you, when put it, and you work very hard, it will grow up, and it will give you good flowers. So it needs trust. It needs time. It needs to look for the future, for hope.

It's tough, but if we believe, and we have faith, we can go. So I need my patients to think about the donors. It's very important that the donor who is living or deceased, brain death, cardiac death, but there is not just a donor. It's not just an organ that we took from the patient. It's a more than.

We should think about the families of those donors. We should support them. We should be there for them. For my patient, I hope that they will respect that. I hope that they will remember that. I hope that they will be there for those families, because it's very important, because those families that they give life, that they give this organ, either living or diseased. We should be there for them, because when we are there, they will feel that they give the best thing.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

How do you feel your team has continued to provide life-saving support during this time of crisis, especially in Israel?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Yeah. It's a hard period that we go together. But as I tell you, the "T", it's together. When we are together, we can pass it, pass it. We do everything to support our patients, to build our system. So in a simple way, we should pass that together. As Noah's Ark, as I told you, it was difficult, but they could do that. And I believe that we have a great- family, a great hospital, that we should put every politics inside and work together because we do everything for the human being, not just for politics.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

What, what is something, if you could let, uh, Hadassah supporters in the US know, uh, about Israel, about your team, about Hadassah, what's something that you would want to leave with them or to tell them?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

I wanted to tell them that- We trust you that you are doing everything. You share with us a lot of your feelings and your support. This is very, very important to advance the hospital, the treatment of the patient, to build the future, to build every facility in the hospital. We just talked about robotic systems. This is a unique opportunity to build the future, and we have done with your help, and I hope that we will continue, and you will build the future, and we shape the hospital in the best way that we should and that we're supposed to do that for you.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

I know you can't say too much, but I'd love to know a little bit more about your research. I think you were talking about that earlier before we started our interview, but I'd love it if you could tell us as much as you can, about the exciting research that your team is doing and how it is going to continue to save lives.

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Yeah. We are doing special research in the field of liquid biopsy. So what we used to do in order to diagnose rejection, which is part of the complications of solid organ transplantation, we used to biopsy the organs, to take small piece of that liver or kidney and to look under the microscope and to identify that there is a rejection process deep inside, that it could lead to lose of that organ, and it could lead even to death of the patient.

For that, we started that journey long time ago, collecting samples from patients, and we have come with results, very exciting results. Those results give us to look for the cell-free DNA, which is small particles inside our DNA that it could break down, and we can see that inside the sample of the blood, small sample.

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

We can take small samples while daily we do that for our patient to check the hemoglobin level, to take, and to check other things. So we can look for those, for this sample, and we can say that there is a rejection- Going there inside this organ. So it's unique.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

It's groundbreaking.

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Yeah, it's groundbreaking, and we hope that those results will be published soon. It's, it's unique for Hadassah Hospital, and it's really amazing. It will affect all of the organ transplantation. I mean, right now, the liver one outcome.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

Hadassah is lifechanging. Led by women, rooted in Jewish values, and with a commitment to Israel and all of its people, Hadassah works every day to bring healing where it's needed most.

Join us in our mission to advance healthcare, drive medical innovation, empower women and youth, and combat hate in the US, in Israel, and around the world. Hadassah members are the power behind our life-changing movement. Join us today and change your life. [Hadassah.org/join](https://www.hadassah.org/join).

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

Is there a, uh, a patient story or a memorable event or something that kinda like sticks in your mind that you'd love to share with us?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Yeah, I just share about that. It was a young girl, 18 years old, that, uh, she suffered from acute liver failure, which means she was in coma. She was almost dying, and we were looking for living donor inside the family, so we could not find because it was not the same blood group. And finally, we could do that from a deceased donor.

So she was transplanted against ABO, we call that. She got another group, blood group. It was sophisticated. We prepared her well, but after the surgery, the organ was too big. We could not close her belly. So she went through another surgery in order to close her belly, and it was a really hard, tough time with the family to understand that a young girl playing on guitar could get very sick. She was very, very beautiful one. But the interesting part of that story was that after she got right from this disease and she was discharged, her family were looking for a marriage for her. So it just not was to be me as surgeon. It was looking for her husband. So when she finally get married, it was wonderful for me to be there at her marriage. I remember that. And finally, even more, she had a baby, like six months ago, so it's closed, you know, for me the circle for this patient and for her family.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

So it's like you're not only a doctor, but you're a matchmaker. You're, you're all these things. So is there anything that we didn't ask you? Is there anything that you- anything else that you'd like to share with us or to let us know about your work, about Hadassah, anything at all?

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Yeah. I wanted to tell you, you, that one of the things that I'm interested in is building up the future and putting the team in the right road. This is, you know, what is w- this is my aim following more than 20 years working. I think and I believe this is, this should be the aim of everyone who is in my position, to leave this way and to leave good team, very well-structured with, let's say, a big aims to put them on the right way.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

Thank you. Well, thank you so much for being a guest on Hadassah on Call. We were more than excited to have you. You are actually our first guest in the US.

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Wow.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

So- Thank you ... I think that's pretty exciting. But thank you so much, and we hope that you continue to do life-saving work. We know you will, and, um, that you enjoy the rest of your time in the US.

**Dr. Abed Khalaileh:**

Thank you. It was my pleasure ... to be here.

**Adeola Saul, HOC Producer:**

You're very welcome. Thank you.

**Maayan Hoffman:**

Hadassah on Call: New Frontiers in Medicine is a production of Hadassah, the Women Zionist Organization of America. Hadassah enhances the health of people around the world through medical education, care, and research innovations at Hadassah Medical Organization.

For more information on the latest advances in medicine, please head on over to [hadassah.org/news](https://hadassah.org/news). Extra notes and a transcript of today's episode can be found at [hadassah.org/hadassah-on-call](https://hadassah.org/hadassah-on-call). When you're there, you can also sign up to receive an email and be the first to know when new episodes of the show are released.

Subscribe to our show on Apple Podcast, Google Play, or your favorite podcast app. If you haven't already, please leave us a review on the Apple Podcast store. It only takes a minute, and when you do, it helps others discover Hadassah on Call. This show is produced by the team at the Hadassah offices in both New York and Israel.

I'm your host, Maayan Hoffman, and thanks again for joining us today. We'll see you next month.