

NO GOING BACK TO HOW I ATE BEFORE

Meet 29-year-old Candice from Kitchener, Ontario.

While at university it was discovered that she had stage 5 kidney disease. Read how she kick-started her new life, throttled into gear and jumped right into it.

BY ELKE HENNEBERG, EDITOR



At an organ transplant awareness event: Candice and her mother

Please tell us a little bit about your story!

I ended up in the emergency room one day with flu-like symptoms. Back then I had no idea about kidney disease. My creatinine level was sky-high and I was put on dialysis right away. The diagnosis of advanced kidney disease came as a big shock to my family and me. After three weeks in the hospital I had to take a break from my studies and moved back to my parents' home.

I went for dialysis sessions three times a week for 4 months. Then I switched to peritoneal dialysis (PD). I used the cyclor every night and even did some travelling. PD was a better set-up for me because it gave me more flexibility. After a year of PD I was very lucky and had a transplant. My mother was my match and gave one of her kidneys, and it has been working ever since. My life is pretty much back to normal and I feel very good.

What did you think of the diet when you started dialysis?

It was very difficult for me not to have any more whole grains and my favourite dish, which is chili, because of the dietary restrictions! I was very lucky, though, because my family was so supportive and we all started eating salt-free and learned how to make great food within the limits of a dialysis diet.

Spice it up! and materials I received from my renal dietitian at the hospital were a great support for us.

How did your diet change when you switched from hemodialysis to PD?

It meant more freedom in many ways... and a big improvement in my lifestyle. The diet was much less of a challenge and so were the fluid restrictions, because I was on dialysis every day.

What were the biggest challenges for you and what did you miss the most?

At the beginning, when I got out of the hospital, it felt like my days were planned around eating and food. What can I eat and what can't I eat and when? No chocolate and no grains were probably the worst restrictions for me. And what to have for lunch and as a snack? We live in such a fast paced world – it is hard when you cannot just grab a bite in a diner or at a fast food counter!

My family and I had to learn together and we adapted very well, but it was a lot of work.

What do you think about Spice it up!?

What a great resource! It gave my family and me the idea that a kidney diet does not have to be boring. And it brings the security that you can enjoy all that great food because it is safe for people on



Enjoying the good life: Candice with her fiancée Mike

dialysis. My whole family joined me in eating kidney-friendly and they do not feel they are missing much. I worked for a few years at the Kidney Foundation and I met many fellow patients who wait for every new issue of **Spice it up!** I was also involved in

some cooking classes for kidney patients where we saw the preparation of some **Spice it up!** recipes. Who can resist the ginger crackles?*

Now that you've had a transplant, do you still follow a kidney-friendly diet?

Yes, I watch my sodium intake and I check food labels. So does my family. I will never go back to how I ate before, I don't think. But I eat whole grains again and many of my favourites are back. . .like chocolate! With the transplant came a bit of weight gain because of the drugs I am taking so I keep an eye on the calories, for sure. But overall my mom and I are doing very well.

What's next for you?

I am happy in my job and I am about to get married. My partner went through all of this with me from day one! I also do some volunteer work at a hospital and for the Kidney Foundation.

The shock of kidney disease turned into a good thing because it brought our family closer together and it taught me what I really want to do with my life. I found out that I want to work in the charitable healthcare industry.

*Recipe can be found on our website www.myspiceitup.ca

6 SERVINGS

CREAMY RICE PUDDING*



INGREDIENTS

- 1 bottle **Nepro**® (237mL)
- 1/2 cup arborio or other short-grain rice
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1 stick of cinnamon

Nutrient Analysis	
PER SERVING	
1/2 cup	
Calories	204Kcal
Protein	8g
Carbohydrates	25g
Fibre	1g
Fat	8g
Sodium	94mg
Potassium	213mg
Phosphorus	146mg

PREPARATION

- 1 In a large saucepan, bring the rice and milk to a boil.
- 2 Reduce the heat and stir in **Nepro**® (do not boil).
- 3 Add the cinnamon stick and simmer for 1 hour, stirring frequently.
- 4 Add more milk, if required.
- 5 Transfer to a bowl and serve.

Serving suggestions: Top with strawberry jam or honey.