



Taking Control with PD

Twenty-nine year old Tracie has many passions in her life: her 3 1/2-year-old son, her husband, her family, singing, and shopping. She also has a passion for two foods that can cause problems for people with kidney disease. "I would love to eat french fries and chocolate all day," she confesses. But for peritoneal dialysis (PD) patient Tracie, being able to make choices about what she eats is a part of taking control of her life with kidney disease.

In April of 1999, Tracie was diagnosed with kidney failure resulting from FSGS (focal segmental glomerulosclerosis.) She underwent hemodialysis while pregnant, with a lot of trials and tribulations. "I am a tiny person to begin with; before I was pregnant I only weighed 86 pounds," Tracie says. "When I was on hemodialysis my weight dropped. That's when I knew I needed to take control over my life and my health."

Making the Change to PD

A member of her healthcare team suggested that Tracie try PD. After meeting with a renal dietitian who worked with people on PD, Tracie learned about her limits and requirements, including getting enough protein. She was delighted to learn that her PD diet would have few modifications. "When they told me I could drink more and eat more things, that really made me decide to try it," Tracie recalls. "PD gives me a lot of freedom."

Because her PD diet is flexible, making the adjustment to a PD meal plan was not difficult for Tracie. In fact, she hasn't really altered what she cooks for her family. Still, PD patients, like most people on dialysis, must modify some things like phosphorus, potassium, sodium, and calories in their diet. "I watch what I eat. For example, if I'm going to a family picnic, I don't eat that many barbecued beans," she explains. "I might try a little taste of the beans, but I don't make anyone cook anything special for me."

A Flexible Diet

When she first started hemodialysis, Tracie did find herself depressed about her food choices. "So many things were 'off-limits.' My family would say, 'You can't eat this or you can't eat that,'" Tracie remembers. Now, Tracie has a more flexible PD diet...and a more flexible attitude. Tracie believes that many people would be less depressed about



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their kidney disease if they took more control over their treatment, including food choices. “Some people say they’ve totally removed favorite foods out of their diet,” she says. “I can’t do that because I love certain things too much. I monitor myself and don’t overindulge, but there are some things, like chocolate and potatoes, that I just cannot give up completely—so I limit myself to small amounts and make tradeoffs.” Like many successful dialysis patients, Tracie knows that moderation makes sense.

For Tracie, PD has made all the difference in her life with kidney disease. “I would encourage PD for anybody who can do it,” she declares. “It’s less wear and tear on the body and it makes me feel good. Whoever invented PD had a good idea!”



Additional Resources...

A variety of resources are available to help you make changes to your PD meal plan. Speak to a dietitian or check the following sources:

- Baxter Healthcare Corporation – <http://www.kidneydirections.com>
- *Diet Guide for the CAPD Patient* – call the American Kidney Fund (AKF) at (800) 638-8299
- Kidney School™ Module 9: Nutrition – <http://www.kidneyschool.org>
- *Nutrition and Peritoneal Dialysis* brochure – visit the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) website at <http://www.kidney.org/general/atoz/>

Recipe Corner

Many people on PD enjoy having a more “open” diet, but even a PD meal plan requires changes to keep you healthy. For example, to keep your weight down, you may need to reduce sugar in your diet because the dialysate contains sugar (dextrose).

Work with a dietitian to make livable changes to your meal plans. With time, you can learn to enjoy the changes and develop eating habits that will benefit you—and your family and friends as well! See the sample recipe below for a great lunch idea:

Lemon Curry Chicken Salad

(Makes 4, 1-cup servings)

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup oil
- 4 tbsp. thawed lemonade concentrate
- 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp. curry powder
- 1/8 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 1/2 cups cooked, diced chicken
- 1 1/2 cups grapes, halved
- 1/2 cup sliced celery

Directions:

In a large bowl, combine oil, lemonade concentrate, and spices. Add remaining ingredients and toss lightly. Chill.

Calories–307, Carbohydrates–15, Protein–17, Fat–20, Sodium–57, Potassium–235, Phosphorus–119

(Recipe courtesy of Living Well on Dialysis: A Cookbook for Patients and Their Families, developed by the National Kidney Foundation Council on Renal Nutrition, and available for free, on-line at http://www.kidney.org/patients/cookbook/living_well.htm.)

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www.kidneydirections.com