



Savory Recipes for Renal Patients

Food Network chef Aaron McCargo Jr, host of *Big Daddy's House*, has developed bold and flavorful dishes for patients with kidney disease across the country. Here, he shares five of his creations with *Today's Dietitian* so your patients won't have to worry about dietary restrictions this holiday season.

By **Densie Webb, PhD, RD**



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he holidays are here along with all the tempting, mouthwatering foods and sweet treats that will be served at family gatherings.

Now imagine clients with kidney disease who have been invited to attend these seasonal soirees. There are many delicious, flavorful foods they may need to avoid because they must choose foods

that provide high-quality protein with little phosphorus. They must say no to packaged foods that contain phosphate additives, select foods low in sodium, and eat a limited number of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products while still meeting their vitamin and mineral requirements. It's a dietary Rubik's cube that renal patients and those on dialysis face around the holidays and every day of their lives.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, 26 million American adults have chronic kidney disease, with an estimated 400,000 diagnosed with end-stage renal disease requiring regular hemodialysis to filter out the toxins in their blood—the function of healthy kidneys.¹ Up to two-thirds of chronic kidney disease cases are caused by diabetes and high blood pressure.² Chronic kidney disease, once diagnosed, progresses in stages based on the kidneys' glomerular filtration rate (GFR), a measure of the kidneys' ability to function. When a person reaches stage 4, with a GFR of less than 30, the patient's doctor will discuss treatment options, including dialysis.³ Once dialysis begins, typically it continues for a lifetime or until a donor kidney is found. The same holds true of the diets that dialysis patients must follow.

Enter Chef Aaron McCargo Jr, host of *Big Daddy's House* on the Food Network and winner of *The Next Food Network Star* season 4. He has partnered with Fresenius Medical Care North America (FMCNA), a major provider of kidney dialysis services and renal care products that has more than 2,100 dialysis facilities in North America, and with FMCNA's dietitian, Robin Russell, MS, RD, CSR, LD, to take on the challenge of preparing recipes to meet the special dietary needs of dialysis patients nationwide. The result is 15 recipes, 12 of which are brand new.

McCargo concedes that developing recipes for this population was a challenge. "Chefs don't look at vitamins A and D in foods; we look at ingredients," he says. When he first saw the list of foods to avoid or limit, he says it was surprising. "But I had a wake-up call when I realized that I could work within those limits. All the information from FMCNA and Robin educated me; it didn't frustrate me. It was a challenge.

"I've had tasters comment, 'Well, it could use a bit more salt.' When I tell them it doesn't contain any salt, they're shocked." All the herbs and spices McCargo uses make up for the lack of salt in his recipes. Some of his favorite ingredients include Mexican smoked paprika, cumin, chili

powder, crushed red pepper flakes, dried oregano, thyme, lemon zest, and Italian blend.

Russell says developing the recipes with McCargo was a true collaboration. "He would suggest an ingredient, and I would say, 'Well, we can't really use that, so what about this?' Also, we didn't want a lot of expensive specialty products. We wanted the recipes to be practical, so we used widely available ingredients."

McCargo, who has family members and friends on dialysis, says he's determined not to let dialysis mean that people can't enjoy flavorful foods. He has toured the country sharing his recipes with a huge helping of his unique brand of enthusiasm. The recipes he's shared here with *Today's Dietitian* are perfect holiday fare, bursting with flavor that can be enjoyed by clients and patients and their friends and family without kidney disease during the holidays. In the future, McCargo says he hopes to develop a cookbook, an app, or an educational DVD for dialysis patients.

Russell acknowledges that the holidays are especially challenging for dialysis patients. They're around family, friends, and tempting traditional foods, and they're removed from their day-to-day routines. She says planning ahead is essential, whether for special dinners, office parties, or family gatherings. She suggests the following tips for dialysis patients:

- Ask the host of the holiday party what's on the menu. If you can't eat what will be served, offer to bring a dish that meets your dietary requirements.
- Fill up on safe foods beforehand so you're not tempted to indulge on restricted foods.
- If the gathering is at a restaurant or club, call ahead or check the website to find out what's on the menu and request substitutions if necessary.
- Let family and friends know what you can and can't eat, and ask whether they can prepare certain foods that fit within your dietary limitations.
- Bring your own dish to potluck dinners and office parties so you know, regardless of what's served, you'll have something to enjoy.

"We're hoping that with our recipes, patients will learn that they can include foods they thought they couldn't have on a renal diet," Russell says. "The social aspects of the lives of dialysis patients are very important. We're trying to help them with that."

— Densie Webb, PhD, RD, is a freelance writer, editor, and industry consultant based in Austin, Texas.

For additional recipes and references, view this article on our website at www.TodaysDietitian.com.

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Chicken Pot Pie Stew

Serves 8

Ingredients

- 1½ lbs natural fresh chicken breast, boneless, skinless
- 2 quarts low-sodium chicken stock
- ¼ cup canola oil
- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup fresh carrots, diced
- ½ cup onion, diced
- ¼ cup celery, diced
- 1 T black pepper
- 1 T salt-free Italian seasoning
- 2 T salt-free chicken bouillon powder
- ½ cup fresh frozen sweet peas, thawed
- ½ cup light cream
- 1 frozen piecrust, cooked and broken into bite-size pieces

Directions

1. Pound chicken to tenderize, quick-freeze for 30 minutes for easy cutting, then cube.
2. Put chicken and stock in large stockpot and cook on medium-high heat for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, mix oil and flour until well blended. Then slowly pour and stir into chicken broth mixture until slightly thickened. Reduce heat to medium-low or low for 15 minutes.
3. Add carrots, onion, celery, black pepper, Italian seasoning, and bouillon. Cook for an additional 15 minutes. Turn off heat, and then add peas and cream. Stir until mixed well.
4. Serve in mugs and top with equal amounts of piecrust as garnish.

Nutrient Analysis per 1-cup serving

Calories: 419; Protein: 30 g; Carbohydrate: 24 g; Total fat: 22 g; Sat fat: 7 g; Trans fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 94 mg; Potassium: 412 mg; Phosphorus: 229 mg; Sodium: 296 mg



Shrimp Stuffing From the Bayou

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

- ¾ lb small raw shrimp (25 to 30), peeled and deveined
- 2 cups cubed Italian bread
- 1 cup coarsely crushed unsalted saltine crackers (about 23 crackers)
- ¼ cup diced onion
- ¼ cup diced celery
- ¼ cup diced bell pepper
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ¾ cup low-sodium chicken stock
- 2 T chopped fresh thyme (or 1 T dried)
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp dried sage
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 2 T chopped parsley

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In large sauté pan, melt butter on medium-high heat. Add shrimp and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, or until slightly pink and slightly raw in the middle. Remove shrimp from pan and place on a plate to cool and then chop into medium-size pieces.
3. Put pan back on heat and add onion, celery, and bell pepper, and cook while stirring until soft, about 3 to 5 minutes.
4. In small bowl, mix all dry spices, add to pan and stir. Add chicken stock, cubed bread, and crushed crackers and stir until well incorporated and bread is moistened. Turn heat to low and add shrimp back to pan and stir for an additional 2 to 4 minutes.
5. Turn off heat and serve. For a crispy top, bake in a 4-X 7-in casserole dish at 350°F for approximately 15 minutes or until top begins to brown.

Nutrient Analysis per serving (3 oz)

Calories: 126; Total fat: 6 g; Sat fat: 3 g; Trans fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 16 mg; Total carbohydrate: 16 g; Protein: 3 g; Potassium: 108 mg; Phosphorus: 38 mg; Sodium: 155 mg

Spicy Honey-Glazed Pork Chops

Serves 5

Ingredients

- 1½ lbs (or 5 thinly sliced) boneless center-cut pork chops
- 1½ T canola oil
- ¼ cup honey
- Spice blend (mix together in small bowl): 1 T cayenne pepper, 1 T smoked paprika, ½ tsp Italian seasoning, ½ tsp black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat grill or broiler.
2. After rinsing off pork chops, pat dry with paper towels. In medium bowl, mix oil and spice blend together and toss pork chops in mixture until evenly coated.
3. Place pork chops on a wire or cake rack on top of a sheet tray, leaving space in between pork chops while placing on rack.
4. Broil 2 to 3 minutes in preheated oven (set on broil) or grill 2 to 3 minutes, then turn over and cook for an additional 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Brush pork chops with honey on the one side and grill or broil for additional 1 to 2 minutes or until lightly caramelized.
6. Remove pork chops from oven or grill and let rest 3 to 5 minutes before cutting.

Nutrient Analysis per serving (1 pork chop)

Calories: 320; Total fat: 15 g; Sat fat: 4 g; Trans fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 93 mg; Sodium: 69 mg; Total carbohydrate: 15 g; Protein: 28 g; Potassium: 462 mg; Phosphorus: 265 mg



Crunchy Picking Pumpkin Strudel

Serves 8

Ingredients

- 12 sheets phyllo dough
- 1½ cups canned pumpkin
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 T cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- 2 T vanilla extract
- ½ stick (4 T) unsalted butter (melted)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a medium-size bowl, add canned pumpkin, half the sugar, half the cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, and mix well.
3. Brush melted butter on bottom of nonstick medium-size sheet tray and in between every other phyllo sheet. (Be sure to save a little melted butter to brush the top of the rolled filled strudel, so go light when brushing in between layers.)
4. To assemble and pack the strudel: Stack the sheets together in one pile and pour mix on one edge of the stacked phyllo sheets, length side, then roll from filled end to unfilled end making sure the seam side ends up facing down.
5. Place on a greased sheet tray seam side down and brush with remaining butter. Mix remaining sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over the top and sides of the strudel. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting to allow center to settle.

Nutrient Analysis per serving (1 slice)

Calories: 187; Total fat: 8 g; Sat fat: 4 g; Trans fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 15 mg; Sodium: 141 mg; Total carbohydrate: 26 g; Protein: 3 g; Potassium: 126 mg; Phosphorus: 40 mg



Apple-Stuffed Cinnamon Bundles

Serves 6

Ingredients

Apple Mixture

- 3½ cups of peeled, medium-diced Granny Smith, Washington Gala, and Honey Crisp apples mixed (about 4 apples)
- ¼ cup light brown sugar (for those with diabetes, ¼ cup agave nectar can be substituted)
- 2 T firm unsalted butter
- ¼ cup melted unsalted butter (for buttering phyllo pastry sheets)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp corn starch
- 2 T vanilla extract
- 1 package (6 sheets) phyllo dough

Combine in a small bowl

- 3 T powdered sugar
- 2 T cinnamon

Garnish

- Powdered sugar
- Fresh mint
- Whipped cream or low-fat whipped topping

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. For the apple mixture: In large sauté pan on medium-high heat, sauté apples in butter for 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and cook for an additional 3 to 4 minutes.
3. In a small cup, mix cornstarch and vanilla extract until dissolved, stir into apple mixture and cook for an additional 2 minutes on medium-high heat. Turn off heat and set aside.
4. For the phyllo dough bundles, lightly grease a large 6-muffin tin pan.
5. Starting with the first sheet of phyllo dough, brush each side with melted butter, then dust with the powdered sugar and cinnamon mix. Continue until all 6 sheets have been buttered and dusted with sugar and cinnamon mix, stacking one sheet on top of the other as you go.

6. To assemble and bake the bundles: Cut the stack into 6 squares. Line the bottom and sides of each muffin cup using one stack of squares. Leave an overhang.

7. Fill each phyllo-lined muffin cup ½ to ¾ full with the apple mixture (this will depend on how big the apples are cut), making sure each phyllo-lined muffin cup has equal amounts of apple mixture.

8. Fold excess phyllo dough over the apples in each muffin cup and pinch top closed to create the bundles. Bake in preheated oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown. Garnish with powdered sugar, whipped cream, and sprig of fresh mint. Serve.

Note: There are a few types of year-round apples that are available in most supermarkets and fruit stands across the country. Select one sour and two sweet apple varieties for your recipe: Empire, Fuji, Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Granny Smith.

Nutrient Analysis per serving (1 bundle)

Calories: 249; Total fat: 14 g; Sat fat: 9 g; Trans fat: 0 g; Cholesterol: 31 mg; Sodium: 99 mg; Total carbohydrate: 29 g; Protein: 2 g; Potassium: 102 mg; Phosphorus: 26 mg

For more recipes and information on nutrition for kidney disease and dialysis patients, visit www.ultracare-dialysis.com/RecipeCenter.aspx or www.kidney.org.