

Although there's masses of information about cooking for invalids. there's very little around to help if you want to do the cooking yourself. I'm both a cook and an invalid - and I have had to learn what I can or can't do by an endless process of trial and error. So, for any of you out there who are plagued by a chronic illness or a disability, here are a few tips to keep you feeling a part of the real world.

Because we invalids not only need our families and friends. We need to do "normal" things: to prepare and share with the folks we love best; to get dressed up and serve brunches to have company back to the house after a play. You may not be able to go to the play itself, but you can certainly enjoy hearing about it first hand.

Restaurants are not the answer. Few have facilities which really make it easy for little items like wheelchairs and crutches. And by the time you've sipped your way through two glasses of iced water - people taking pills don't dare drink alcohol - and the appetizer hasn't arrived yet, you may find yourself wondering if anyone would notice you curled up on the floor of the ladies' rest room. Few restaurants I've been in provided a couch on which a patron can recuperate between courses. It would give them a bad image, I suppose.

So, the answer is home entertaining. If you can afford catering, that's fine. Except it doesn't give you the satisfaction of preparing and presenting food which you have cared enough to cook yourself. And it really isn't that difficult to be a good cook, a good hostess and an invalid, all under the same negligee. All you have to do is change some of the rules. Here's how.

Acceptance. From you, your friends, and your family. Early on in an illness they tend to say such things as:

"No, we don't want to bother you."

"You musn't worry about having dinner for us. Wait until you feel better."

"It's too much for you to do."

"You'll get too tired."

They must accept that since this is truly a chronic illness, it isn't going to go away. And you don't want your circle of friends and family to go away because your illness won't. And you must accept that you are not going to roar around offering hors d'oeuvres and filling glasses. If your guests can't go to the table and help themselves, then they deserve to go home hungry. And thirsty.

## HOW TO BE AN INVALID COOK By Eleanore Thomson

Honesty. Total honesty. If you wake up to a truly bad morning on the day of the big bash, or the night before has been a real horror, you must simply pick up the phone and put the whole thing on hold. Your friends must be able to trust you to do this.

Planning. Not new to parties. This is the time when all those lovely old recipes that can be prepared ahead of time, and are willing to wait patiently, mellowing as they wait, are invaluable.

Don't waste your energy. It's probably your most treasured asset right now. Use every single appliance and gadget you can get inside your aching little hands.

Don't stand around and brown things like chicken and pot roasts at the stove. Use your broiler.

Wind up your food processor and do bags of vegetables at one time. They'll keep for ages in an airtight plastic bag in the fridge.

Buy a timer. You can rest between buzzes or dings.

Chunk up a piece of that lovely, but hard to peel, ginger root. Put it in an empty jelly glass. Cover it with white wine. Store in the fridge. Now you have ginger-flavored wine for stir fries, to deglaze pans, to pour over chicken breasts or to add to roasting pork.

Stop buying cooking wine in bottles with corks. The struggle isn't worth it. At party time turn the wine-opening chore over to a guest.

Your diet can be a problem. Most people with chronic illness don't need extra calories. And they definately don't need salt. My attitude towards calories for a party, is to "save" them for a few days. More difficult than putting money in the bank. Then forget about them for one meal. Since it takes 3,500 unburned calories to make one pound of body weight you won't grow a dress size with one lovely meal.

However! Salt is another ball game. The status of your illness will give you the answer to this one. If you're simply not supposed to add extra salt to your food, one incautious meal probably won't leave lasting bad effects., But if your tolerance for salt is so low that you end up propped on three pillows to breathe if somebody sneaks some salt-laden soy sauce into a recipe, you have to be much more careful. I keep some chicken breasts wrapped seperately in the freezer. If I'm serving chicken to quests, in a sauce that's loaded with the old devil sodium, I zap my chicken

breast quietly in the microwave with some wine and garlic powder and avoid the sauce.

A big freezer is not a luxury for you, it's a necessity. On good days it's easy to make two of something. Stash one of them away for a bad day. Or a party. When you can get out to buy your own groceries - heaven!! - buy lots at one time. You'll learn quickly, what every well stocked freezer should have in it's innards to help you produce a gourmet meal at the drop of a pill bottle.

A well stocked pantry is also a necessity. A recent magazine article I read insists that every pantry must have things like "extra virgin olive oil" (which immediately brought to mind pictures of olives wearing little chastity belts) and sun dried tomatoes, or the modern hostess cannot, simply cannot, cope. Garbage. My pantry goes back to the farm days when the basics were flour, sugar, butter, baking powder, yeast, fruit and vegetables. I admit to wanting a few cans of baby clams around, some water chestnuts, some good Parmesan cheese. brown and white rice, and I'm sure I have a jar of every mustard known to mankind. Learning to cook without salt is a teaching experience in itself! One son-in-law started our relationship off inauspiciously - he ended it that way too - by commenting as he rooted around in my pantry; "Anyone who stocks good pimientos on their shelves can't be all bad!"

Get yourself a good haircut, a simple one, and some good clothes that don't wrinkle when you lounge about in them. Practise with makeup until you need the absolute least to look the absolute best.

Invest in a chaise lounge. Pretend you're Camille. No, that's a bit too final. Try Elizabeth Barrett Browning. I'm sure old Liz could produce a gourmet meal if Robert was tending bar in the corner. One of those plastic sun chairs works fine. The back adjusts so you can rest but still be involved in the party. It may not do much for your decor, but it does wonderful things for your spirits.

NEXT MONTH- Recipes for invalid cooks and perchance for the hale, hearty but lazy ones too!

Our special thanks to  
Eleanor Thomson

who is generously allowing us to use a wide selection of her published work. Eleanor is a regular contributor to the Kingston Whig Standard Magazine and newspaper. She is also the author of A Loving Legacy, recently published by Butternut Press.

## RIDEAU CAPTURES EOSSA TITLE

After two days of exciting senior boys basketball held at Rideau District High School in Elgin on Friday and Saturday, the host team, the Rideau Lions took home the title through supreme team effort and avid support from fans under the direction of the Head Cheerleader, the Rideau Lion.

Rideau was in fine form, winning all four of their games. On Friday in the first game they were victorious over Carleton Place by a score of 79 to 64. In the second game, they defeated MacKenzie (Deep River) 80 - 65. The most outstanding game was on Saturday against Q.E.C.V.I. (Kingston) where excellent opposition saw the game's score tied for several minutes in the third quarter. With two and one-half minutes to go, Rideau was down by five points. Only the complete team effort pulled them even then on to victory with the final score Rideau 73, Q.E.C.V.I. 66. In the final championship game, Rideau again met Carleton Place and managed to repeat their earlier win by defeating them 84 - 64.

The team showed their ability to play decisive ball despite the loss of their tall center Chris Lemcke for the first three games due to an ankle injury. Top scorers throughout the tournament were consistently #4, Steve Visser and #34 Scott Wykes, followed by #43 Todd Visser. Steve Visser also provided valuable floor leadership in pushing the ball up the court. Kevin Cairns showed incredible defensive hustle in all games. Excellent offensive and defensive play was demonstrated by Tom Burns and Mark McCreary, and Todd Visser was true to form with his accurate outside shots. Scott Wykes had an excellent performance picking up the slack under the boards despite aggressive opposition.

Coach Rob Stephenson praised and congratulated the team for their hard work and ability to play together. He also extended his sincere thanks to the many fans (including staff, students and parents from as far away as Sudbury) who came out both days to cheer on the home team. He is now preparing to pack up his team and travel to Timmins for the OFSAA tournament which runs March 9, 10, 11. Good luck to the Rideau Lions!

Congratulations to all teams who participated in the tournament, displaying good skill and sportsmanship. The consolation championship game saw VanKleek Hill defeat Q.E.C.V.I. 81 to 73.