

It's My Week

Today is Tuesday of my week of time off. For those of you who are regular blog readers know that this is my week of prep for cancer testing. I'm two years out from my initial diagnosis of Follicular Thyroid Cancer. Thyroid Cancer is unlike most other cancers. It is treated with radioactive iodine...no chemo...no radiation. That's a huge blessing.

In preparation for the big test on Friday I have been on a low iodine diet- week two of it now for me. That means no iodized salt for me...no dairy, eggs, fish, soy, processed anything including bread ...no going out to eat at all. In theory that doesn't sound terrible and it really isn't but it's challenging. (and I'm a whiner)

We live rural and that in itself has made this so much more than it would be for anyone who lives in the city. For example...the grocery store that is 7 miles away has nothing that is a "no-salt added" product. So I have to drive to the grocery store that's 30 minutes away. I don't mind as the thrift stores are there...but even once there the selection isn't huge so I have to go to Walmart and to Fareway and to the local health food store. Each only has a few products.

I'm finding my best friend is fruit (and the bathroom)....It's the only food that tastes exactly the same to me. So from my refrigerator you can see I'm loaded up on it. I typically eat at least a container a day. I put it on the kitchen island to snack on.



My other cooking...a little more interesting. One of my childcare mom's had a recipe for unstuffed cabbage on her Facebook feed...I thought I could make something similar so I gave it a try...That recipe was meant to be in a crock pot. I was hungry so did it in the Instant Pot instead.

It started easy...hamburger, onions and garlic. (I had to skip the bacon...alas.)



Then it got a little tricky.

The recipe called for rice...um, I can't have rice...well how about Quinoa instead. It's not the same texture but it will do. It's been awhile since I have used Quinoa so I wasn't sure how much it puffed up in comparison to rice so took a guess and put in a cup.



Then the recipe looked like this.

1 (28 ounce) can diced tomatoes

1 (10 oz) can tomato soup

2 tablespoons tomato paste

5-6 cups beef broth

1 1/2 cups V8 or other vegetable juice

Um..how was I going to tackle that???

I had no salt diced tomatoes and tomato paste...no soup, no juice and no broth. UGH. Well the immersion blender turned the diced tomatoes into "juice"...I did another can to make up for the soup. I added two cans of water instead of beef broth.



I knew it would be no where near the recipe...but I held hope that it would be edible. I did add spice but didn't have thyme or Worcestershire sauce (at least not salt free) so I added some nutmeg as long ago I had a stuffed cabbage recipe that did call for nutmeg.

I put it in the Instant Pot- Manual Pressure for 10 minutes....this is what I had.



Mine isn't as tomato-ey as the original but that's okay. I'm getting burnt out on tomatoes.

I'm doing okay but cooking has been a challenge. There are good recipes and good recipe books out there but the problem is so many of them call for ingredients that aren't available in our rural area. It means that I have to use my imagination a little more and that's all okay too. If I make it again...I'm adding two pounds of hamburger instead of one.

I have read so many labels this last week or so. Did you know that chili powder has salt in it? I thought it was only powdered chilis...nope, it's not.

Also because we are so rural I've had to take the week off work. I need to take shots Monday and Tuesday. The shots can only be taken in Lacrosse and that's a two-ish hour drive there and two-ish hour drive back home. That means four hours on the road. Wednesday I have to be back in Lacrosse to take a small dose of radio active iodine. Thursday I have off (my free day)...Friday I have to go for the scan and to meet with my doctor. It's a long week of travel. From the time I park the truck at the clinic, to getting the shot, to getting back in

the truck is only about 20 minutes. I've asked if I could get it done at the local satellite clinic. They say no. It's a specialized shot that costs \$1500 a dose-they can't risk a satellite clinic nurse doing it wrong. UGH. (Thank goodness we have insurance to cover part of it)

Because of the long trek back and forth, I have to take the whole week off of childcare. People who are going through this that live close would likely only have to take an hour off of work each day to manage it.

I love our rural life but when it come to medical things, it's makes getting to the doctor more challenging. Today I have Kelli with on the trek. It's been a bit since I've been able to catch up with her in person. She is going to make the trek with me and keep me company. After my shot we're heading over to the specialist to look at my shoulder...FINALLY! I had an appointment scheduled for March but we had a snowstorm then and I was forced to cancel it. I could have rescheduled sooner but suffered with it to save yet another trip to Lacrosse.

Hubby is going with on Friday and that will for sure include a meal out as after the scan, I can eat regular food again...WHAT A BLESSING!! I'll let you know how things go as they unfold. Thanks for all the well wishes and prayers. It means a lot to me.