

Winter 2019

NephroCare

for me



Indulge yourself!
Sport improves your
well-being

They look out for you -
your nurses

Welcome to Finland -
the country of calm and
contrasts

“Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour.”

John Boswell

Welcome!

Dear Reader,

Are you prepared for the winter months that lie ahead? We have gathered topics, ideas, recommendations and stories to keep you entertained and to let your mind wander. Let us travel northwards, for example, and be **Welcome to Finland – the country of calm and contrasts**. The silence of nature and the people spans a country which is rich in lakes and wildlife. **Portugal** is worth a trip, too – particularly since it has become **a small country with grand plans for your health**. NephroCare has implemented an intradialytic exercise programme through which approximately 500 patients exercise regularly during their treatment. We invite you to **Indulge yourself! Sport improves your well-being** wherever you are. Be inspired by our suggestions on what sports you can perform. There’s more to it than your physical vitality.

Body and mind are one: How do you deal with your emotions? Many people experience winter to be the dull time of shorter days and fewer hours of sunshine. Life is about taking pleasure in the little things around us, though – especially during times of illness or tedium. How do you cope? Perhaps our articles will make you smile? Or maybe our recipes will do that, for example with the delicious **Autumn Crumble**.

Have you ever thought about all the things nurses do for you? Or about the training they went through to be able to do that? **They look out for you – your nurses**, and one of the earliest nurses lay the foundation to professional nursing care. Nurses can follow their studies everywhere around the world. This often leads to long-term relationships. **An international friendship through dialysis** is one exotic example.

As always, we have also asked fellow patients to tell us about their life. Their stories are encouraging and stimulating. See for yourself!

Until next time,

Your NephroCare *for me* Editorial Team



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They look out for you — your nurses

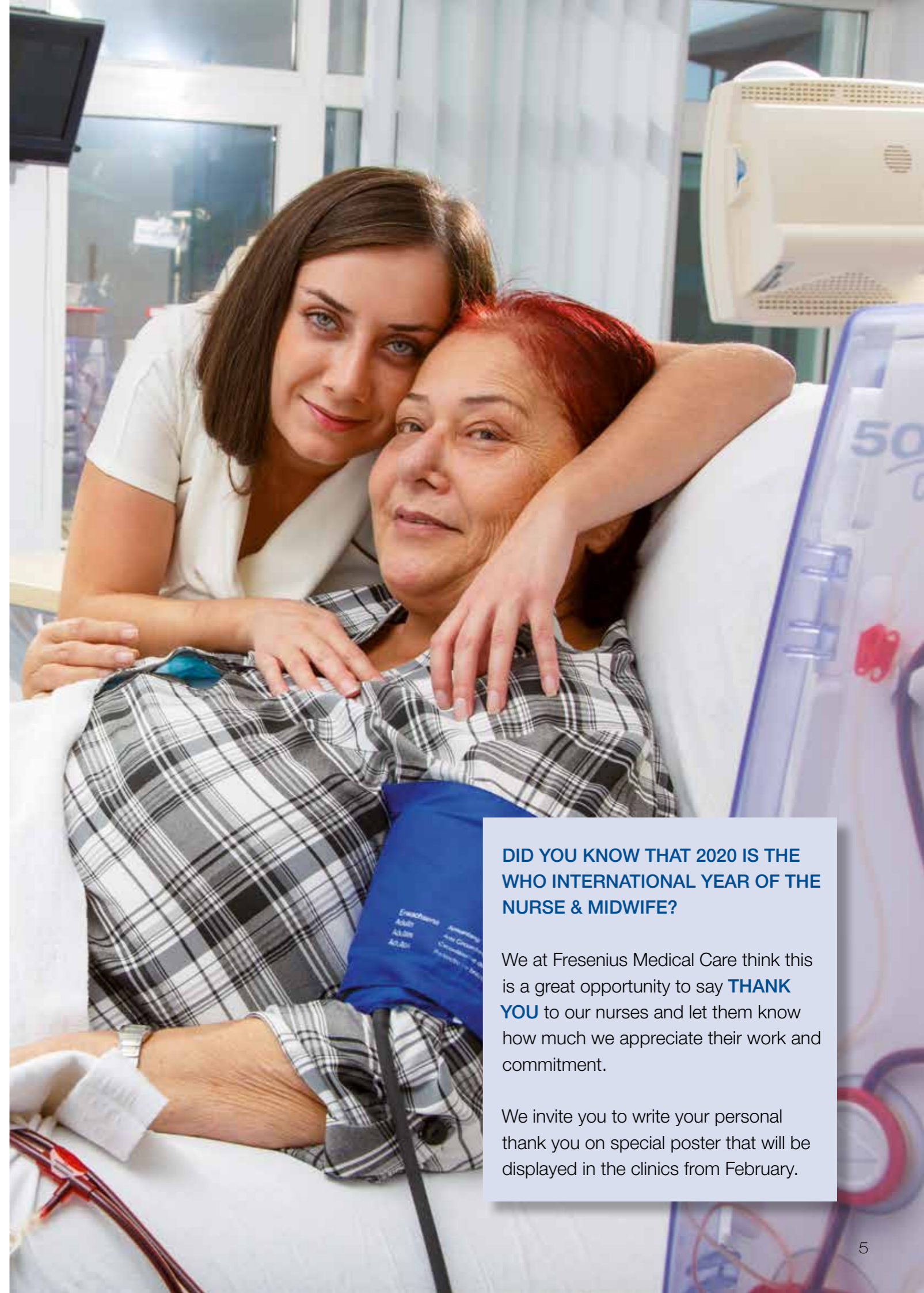
They often are the silver lining in the dialysis routine: Nurses are there for the patients and also help them to cope better with their disease. To fulfil this profession, they have to be diligent, responsible-minded, precise and resilient. In the NephroCare centres, they are your contact person for questions and tips on self-care.

In our days, TV series like Grey's Anatomy and Emergency Room have given a real boost to the occupational profile of the nurse. Over 150 years ago, it was one single lady who reformed the nursing care and training by living her vocation of being a nurse. Born in 1820 into a wealthy British family, Florence Nightingale knows at the young age of 17 that she is meant to be a nurse. Her announcement shocks her parents, as pretty and intelligent young ladies from affluent families become good housewives and mothers at the time – not caregivers to the sick and poor. Hospitals are dirty and dangerous places in those days. So, her parents send her on a long journey through Europe and Egypt in the hope of making her forget her career wish. Everywhere she goes, young Florence visits hospitals as often as ruins and sites. Eventually, her parents show some understanding and allow her to visit a hospital in Germany. She learns the basics of pharmacology and wound care, watches amputations and takes care of dying people.

Her fame arises during the Crimean War, which starts in 1854. At her instigation, Florence is sent to Scutari, in today's Istanbul. She leaves together with 38 volunteers trained

by her in nursing. The hospitals in the area are swamped with wounded soldiers while lacking in medicines, equipment and hygiene. She takes charge of organising the allocation and nursing processes and buys equipment from her own money. She also showers the Minister of War and her personal friend, Sidney Herbert, with requests for supplies. Though she suffers from Crimean fever, she stays to do her work. The soldiers adore her and call her the lady with the lamp because she wanders the wards at night with a lantern to look after the patients when all the doctors are sound asleep. After her return to Britain, she uses her fame to do lobby work and, in 1860, founds a nursing school.

Florence Nightingale always took the living and housing conditions, nutrition, as well as the physical and mental health of the people into account. She made it a rule to observe patients closely and is quoted with the stern admonition: "If a patient is cold, if a patient is feverish, if a patient is faint, if he is sick after taking food, if he has a bed-sore, it is generally the fault not of the disease, but of the nursing." We owe her the basics of theoretical and practical professional nursing care. ►



DID YOU KNOW THAT 2020 IS THE WHO INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE NURSE & MIDWIFE?

We at Fresenius Medical Care think this is a great opportunity to say **THANK YOU** to our nurses and let them know how much we appreciate their work and commitment.

We invite you to write your personal thank you on special poster that will be displayed in the clinics from February.



“Our work only makes sense
if it finds resonance on your side.”

A historical summary

Historically we can say that people who care for people can be intertwined with the history of humanity itself. The instinct of protection and group, motherhood and fatherhood, caring for the elderly and the weak is intrinsic to the human being. But historically, the attribution of these functions to people who have devoted themselves to them more or less exclusively has varied throughout history. A deep religious conviction drove the first formal caregivers. When risks of infection became associated with care, especially in times of very contagious diseases such as the plague, caregivers were primarily recruited from social outcasts. Later on, occupations in healthcare returned to the religious sphere where it remained until a few decades ago.

As mentioned above, modern nursing begins with the determined contributions of Florence Nightingale. Through changes in behaviour and methodical workflows, including hygiene and infection control measures, she had a significant impact on reducing morbidity and mortality among patients. She also contributed immensely to statistics in nursing care. In her publications “Notes on Nursing” and

“Notes on Hospital”, she shared her profound knowledge revisiting the vital concept of “First do no harm” attributed to Hippocrates: “The very first requirement in a hospital is that it should do the sick no harm.”

Today’s outlook on nursing

The nurse of the present day is a highly trained professional who hasn’t lost what has characterised the profession for so long: being endowed with high compassion and competence, doing good to the “human person”.

According to the International Council of Nurses (ICN), nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Additional core activities of nursing are advocacy, development of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy, patient and health systems management, and education.

From the perspective of social recognition, the historical evolution of the profession has



“We will always count on you.
You may always count on us!”

contributed both positively and negatively to the image society has of nurses. Therefore, the sometimes difficult task of validating their role is frequently up to the nurses themselves. Not less important, though, is the responsibility of healthcare providers’ organisations.

Frequently guided by a high spirit of mission, nurses are willing to make personal sacrifices to provide proper care. Yet, modern nurses base their work on knowledge and evidence. They develop important research activities that are, in some way, the driving force for developing and improving the care they devote to sick people. ●

References ICN, 2002

FAMOUS NURSES:

Florence Nightingale (1820-1920), the founder of modern nursing, collected data and made calculations on mortality rate change as sanitary methods were incorporated in the medical facilities.

Clara Barton (1821-1912) founded the American Red Cross after she helped locate missing men and notify families of their status in the American Civil War.

Dorothea Dix (1802-1887) fought for the right of the mentally ill in front of the United States Congress.

Mary Eliza Mahoney (1845-1926) is known as the first registered African American nurse.

Mabel Keaton Staupers (1890-1989) led the battle that was to end racial discrimination among nurses.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892), the famous American writer, became a nurse during the Civil War when his purpose of making the wounded soldiers subjects for his journalistic pieces turned into genuine concern for the patients.



An international friendship through dialysis

Last winter, a dialysis nurse from Namibia visited the NephroCare center in Kladno. Unusual connections led to this exotic visit. Saima tells her story and how she went to medical school in Czechia.



It was a welcome diversion for the staff of Fresenius NephroCare v Kladně when nurse Saima from Namibia came to visit. She wanted to meet with her friend Fata as they had both studied nursing in the Czech Republic. Fata originates from Senegal and now works as a dialysis nurse at the peritoneal dialysis outpatient clinic in Strahov. The two friends were thrilled about the reunion. Saima was also interested to see how dialysis centers are organised in other countries. The staff in Kladno was happy to show her around and have an animated exchange of experiences. Together, they went through the materials and devices, as Saima was interested even in small details of the treatment process.

Saima's story

Saima (45) was born into a family with four siblings in Elim, a small village in Namibia. Her mother was headmaster at the local elementary school. She knew from a young age that she wanted to work in health service and claims herself influenced by her aunt, who was a nurse. Shortly after starting high school, a war broke out in Namibia. Saima and a friend of hers had to flee to Angola at the age of 16. She remembers the hardships well: "It was horrible. We walked and walked, on some days without food, without almost any water, but there was no other option for us." She stayed in Angola for two years before she became the opportunity to go to medical school on a Czech scholarship. The time in Angola changed her life.

When she arrived in the Czech Republic in 1989 without any knowledge of Czech, she participated in an initial six-month language preparation course. Afterwards, she was sent to Turnov, where she attended the General Medical School for four years. During this time she met her friend Fata. As Saima wanted to stay in the Czech Republic after high school, she went to college in Budweis. But then her father became ill and she had to go home to support her family.

Life in Namibia

In Namibia, Saima worked as a nurse and further specialised by studying for her bachelor degree. Today, she works as a nurse for Fresenius Medical Care in the capital of Windhoek. She likes working as a dialysis nurse but also sees the challenges: "The

work comes with great responsibility because there are a lot of patients in Namibia and a lack of doctors. For this reason, nurses have to make many decisions and handle a lot of difficult situations."

Saima is happy to be educated in nephrology and to share her experience and knowledge with both patients and younger colleagues. Helping people is essential to her; she enjoys it and admits that the stories of patients always catch her heart.

Your colleagues in the Czech Republic will be glad to welcome you back, Saima. All the best for you and *thank you* for your commitment! ●



NAMIBIA AT A GLANCE:

- The country gets its name from the Namib Desert – one of the world's oldest deserts.
- Namibia is the second least densely populated country in the world with just 3.2 people per km².
- Its capital and largest city is Windhoek.
- Namibia was a German colony before it was captured by South Africa in World War I. It was granted independence on March 21st, 1990.
- The country has some of the highest sand dunes in the world.



Dialysis: time for you, time for your hobbies

Dialysis patients are regulars in their local NephroCare center. Many patients have come to call the dialysis center their “second home,” as such a large part of their lives takes place at the clinic. Many have come to use these regular time frames for their hobbies. How do you spend that time? Today, Michal Stýblo tells you how he couples his diverse hobbies with his time on dialysis.



Michal Stýblo

Michal Stýblo is a regular at Fresenius NephroCare v Chrudimi in the Czech Republic. He was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of eleven. After 40 years of living with chronic kidney disease, he entered peritoneal dialysis in 2013 but went on haemodialysis after a year due to complications. During that first time, he was booked on the afternoon shift while still working part-time. As his employing company closed down a couple of years ago, he now receives an invalidity pension.

Michal appreciates the support of his family. “Even if going on dialysis was a shock for the family at first, it all worked out after a couple of weeks, and we now take it as a fact,” he remembers. He enjoys cooking with his wife.

Depending on his current nutritional laboratory results, they compile wholesome ingredients for cooking together.

Leisure and hobbies

Michal currently uses the morning shift for dialysis to have the rest of the day for himself. This suits him fine as he can fully devote the time to his hobbies. One of these hobbies is instantly recognisable on visiting him at home. The first thing you notice in the living room is a huge telescope. With it, Michal not only observes the night sky, he also takes pictures when the camera is connected. He views the sky either from his balcony or from a nearby garden, and regularly adds the photographs to his website, www.astroshark.wgz.cz. The hobby astronomer is a member of the Astronomical Forum, where the members share pictures and astronomy-related topics. They are even planning an observation visit with a fellow-patient he met on dialysis.

Another part of the Stýblo family’s home is taken by three large aquariums where colourful fishes swarm. Obviously, Michal takes good care of the fish, as well as of dachshund Chucky.

Dialysis time

When Michal is on his dialysis appointments, he happily uses the time to get a bit of work done on his third big hobby. He is passionate about preparing audiobooks for an online portal. The motto of the Knihovna Do ucha Portal is “we read for those who do not see” (www.do-ucha.cz). Volunteers read books for people with visual impairment, and Michal’s task is the creation of sound effects for the recordings. He has even developed quite sophisticated techniques to make the most of his time on the machine. “It is not enough to just upload a book,” he explains. “Ambient sound such as wind, sea noise and music give dramatic zest to the stories. I carry my tablet with me to dialysis, and I’m connected via Wi-Fi to the internet. This allows me to listen to the spoken text via my headphones and add sound effects.” Uploading all the sounds for one book takes 60 to 70 hours. His biggest project so far, and one which he hugely enjoyed, was Thomas H.

Blok’s novel *Mayday*. The audiobook being handled by a team of twenty people, the whole project lasted about one year. His favourites, however, are the books by Jules Verne which he adores. He made the sound for eight books, so far, and is now working on the ninth.

“I have a nice feeling that I’m doing something good for people who cannot read the book themselves. Through my work, they can listen to it,” Michal describes his attraction to the work. He also appeals to his fellow patients: “Everybody can join the volunteers! Try listening to any of the books. If you do not fully understand your computer, your kids or grandchildren will surely be happy to advise you how to do it with a few clicks. You may want to spend more time on dialysis!”

Thank you, Michal, for sharing your experience and inspiration on how to spend time on dialysis. Have fun with many more recorded books! ●





Waiting for a double transplant

Matthew Luke is a cheerful and active man of 33 years. Watching him interact with his dog Yrra around his cottage near Mělník, you wouldn't suspect that he is waiting for a kidney and pancreas transplant.



Matthew Luke dotes on his wife Marcela and his dog Yrra. A manual labourer in his professional life, he likes to spend his free time on his various hobbies. He has been fascinated with modeling since his childhood when his father helped him construct aircraft models. Besides, he is a member of the cynology ring, where his interests lie mainly in police and military cynology. So, he often trains with his dog. And he copes amazingly with waiting for two new organs.

Diabetes from early childhood

Matthew was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of four. In the early stages of his diabetic treatment, he used syringes. In the meantime, he has a permanent insulin pump which doesn't keep him from swimming in the sea and thermal water. Then, three years ago, his doctors noticed elevated kidney val-

ues. Matthew neglected his doctors' advice, though, as he did not want his kidneys to determine his life.

As a consequence, his condition took a turn for the worse. Being plagued with heavy fatigue and body aches, he couldn't even take his usual walk without breathing heavily. His wife, Marcela, upset because he still went to work, put her foot down, as wives sometimes have to, and took him to the hospital. They were shocked to learn that Matthew had to be dialysed immediately. He recalls his cardiologist's statement: "I had water around my lungs, around my heart, too. He told me that if I had not come in the evening, I would not have lived until morning."

Days of treatment and surgery followed until his condition improved. He went on dialysis in March 2019 and went back to work in June. While he had to accept a couple of restrictions, he manages the manual labour he did before to a great extent. What he can do makes him proud because his work means a lot to him. Matthew's toughness and determination fascinate the people around him. His wife, Marcela, and his family strongly support him. His positive outlook on his illness helps him cope with anything coming his way. Unwilling to sit around and wait for something to happen, he is deter-

mined to overcome his current condition. With his optimistic attitude, he also doesn't mind his dialysis treatments: "It is like a resort with kind staff where I can eat, watch television and talk to other patients."

Preparation for the waiting period

Meanwhile, Matthew is waiting for a kidney and pancreas transplant. The doctors recommended both due to his diabetes and began to prepare him when he consented. The pre-transplantation process consisted of two rounds of in-depth examinations, starting straight on his first visit to the hospital and continuing about a month later with a ten-day stay at the hospital. He has accepted the importance of being able to get to the hospital within a few hours at any given moment, not to get cold and to keep well.

This procedure makes him both excited and a bit nervous. Even so, he sees his situation positively: "I'll take the double transplant in one shot and then I'll be a healthy person."

He has plans for after the transplant that keep him going. Matthew is determined to hike the 125 kilometres from Mělník to mount Sněžka, the highest mountain in the Czech Republic. He is also set on getting another naughty dog and starting a family with Marcela.



Thank you for sharing your story with us, Matthew. We wish you good luck with your plans and much success with the transplant! ●





Welcome to Finland – the country of calm and contrasts

Have you thought about travelling to Finland? Prepare yourself for close to 200.000 lakes, three million saunas, fascinating wildlife, quaint competitions and a lot of odd humour. Join us on a journey to some unique places in the country that shares borders with Norway, Sweden and Russia.

In this country, the seasons are polar opposites. During the summer, the sun hardly sets at all and life happens outdoors. The phenomenon of the midnight sun indulges with up to 24 hours of daylight. In contrast, winter in the Northern European country is cold, dark and adventurous. During this season, people get roughly six hours of wintry-pale sunlight and in rare cases, temperatures can fall to -25 degrees Celsius. Sports fields are swamped with water to turn them into skating rinks. Especially the north meets with heaps of snow but also surprises with magic Northern Lights flickering on the night sky of Finnish-Lapland. These natural spectacles alone make a visit to Finland worth its while. And there's more.

Helsinki, the “Daughter of the Baltic”

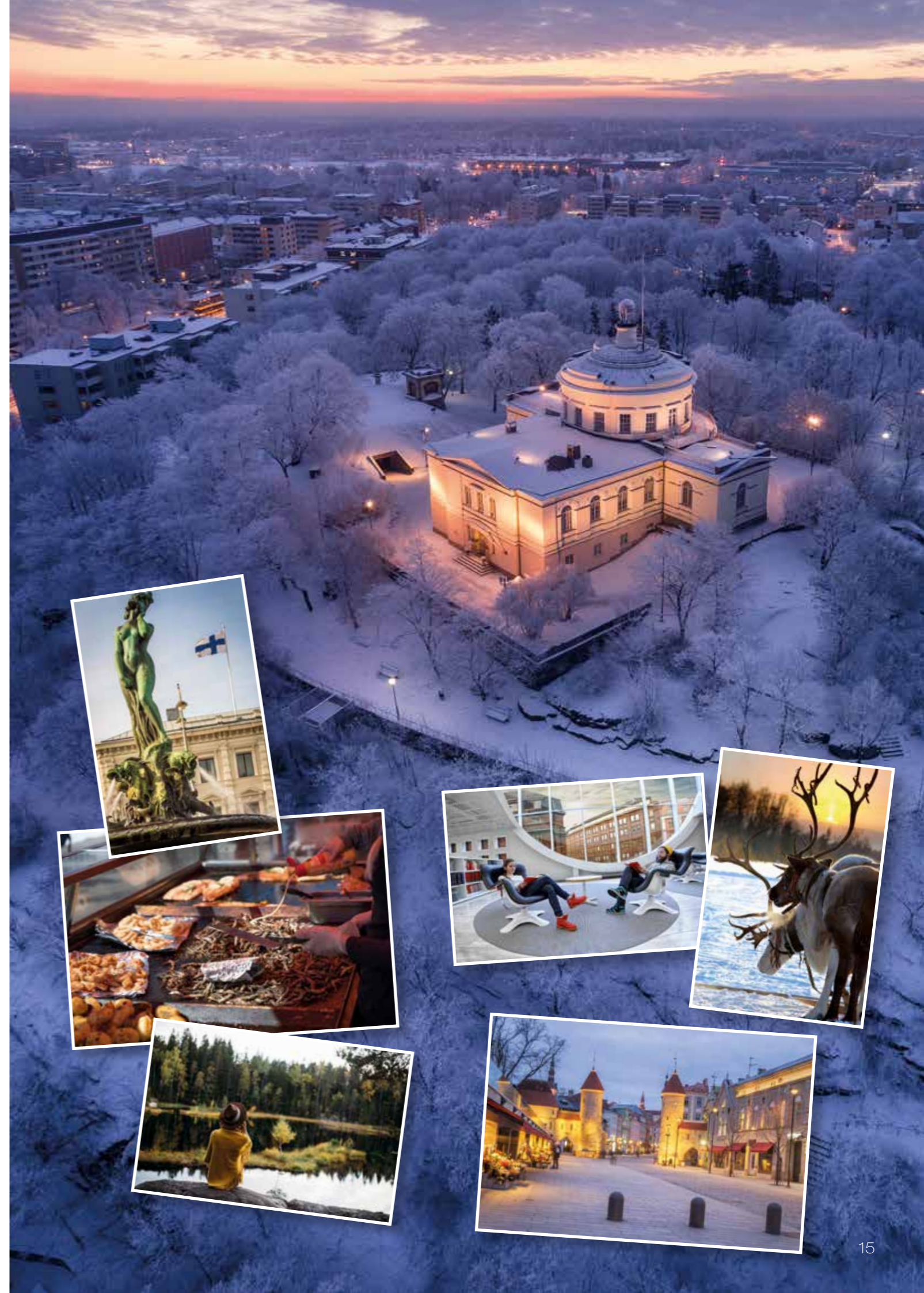
Due to Helsinki's location in the far south and being surrounded by the world's largest group of islands, the Finnish capital has a maritime feel and mood. Even though its per-

sonality is thoroughly Nordic, the city reflects influences from both Western and Eastern cultures. Destroyed in large parts by a fire in 1808, it was rebuilt by the tsars of Russia along the lines of a miniature St. Petersburg.

Helsinki Cathedral, built in the mid-19th century, was formerly called St. Nicholas' Cathedral. The name was chosen in honour of the Russian Tsar Nicholas I who was also Grand Duke of Finland. With the Finnish independence in 1917, it merely became Helsinki Cathedral. Its tall green dome rises above the Helsinki cityscape under any name. When seen at night from the water, the whitewashed neoclassical construction seems to shine like a beacon. Visitors looking for more outward signs of Russia's century-long engagement with Finland will be pleased with Uspenski Cathedral. It is the largest orthodox church in western Europe. With its red-brick towers and their golden cupolas it can't deny its origins. ►

EXPLORE HELSINKI WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR HOLIDAY DIALYSIS IN FINLAND!

Both our clinics, NephroCare Malmi and NephroCare Pitäjänmäki, are in the vicinity of Finland's capital city. Find out more and make appointments for your holiday dialysis: www.nephrocare.com/dialysis-centres/clinic/finland.html





Helsinki's port, the largest in Finland and the second largest in the Nordic countries, is also worth a tour. It has three harbours and six passenger terminals, so all ferry services depart from there. Eighty kilometres south of Helsinki, right across the Gulf of Finland, lies Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. Visitors can go there by boat and enjoy the two-hour trip of time spent on the water. It is a perfect day trip. Christmas fair in Tallinn is exceptionally picturesque and counts among the most beautiful ones in Europe. The old town with cobblestone alleys, enclosed by the old city wall, tempts to enjoy a pleasant stroll. Cosy cafés and small shops make it most inviting.

In the quiet north

One-third of Finland lies north of the Arctic Circle; up there people talk even less than in the south of the country. If you want to experience

wild nature and take part in outdoor activities, then the Finnish north is the place to go. Here, the Northern Lights occur and often paint the night sky in a spectacular, almost surreal variety of colours. It is a spectacle to behold! The phenomenon occurs when charged particles ejected from the sun collide with gas atoms and molecules in the earth's upper atmosphere.

Finnish wildlife is stunning and fascinates with its diversity of species. More than 1,500 bears trek through the vast green forests. They are only seldom seen since they are shy of people. Lynx have found their home in Finland's forests in recent years.



DID YOU KNOW?

- * The country records over 3 million saunas for its 5 million inhabitants. That makes more than one sauna for every other citizen.
- * Finland ranks number one on the lists of the world's highest annual consumption of both milk and coffee. The Finns consume 12 kg of coffee and around 130 litres of milk per person annually.
- * Finland counts 187,888 lakes larger than 500 m². On average, there are 40 lakes per 100 square kilometres in the district.
- * Wife-carrying, a competition in which men have to carry their female teammate (traditionally their wives) through a particular obstacle track, was first introduced in Sonkajärvi, Finland.



Their excellent senses of sight, smell and hearing has them always on alert, so they are hard to spot, too. Even the white-tailed eagle, nearly extinct a few years ago, have once again become a common sight. The majority of people coming to Finland hope to see or visit the reindeer, though. As semi-domesticated herd animals, they can be visited in some of the reindeer farms in the north. Though mostly connected with Santa and the Christmas season, they are a spectacular sight any time of the year. With a population of about 200,000, more reindeer than people are counted in Lapland, where approximately 185,000 inhabitants are registered.

In Kemi, a town in Finnish Lapland, the world's biggest snow castle is built every year. It features a SnowRestaurant with ice tables, where the seats are covered with reindeer fur. Numerous weddings have already been celebrated in the SnowChapel with 50-100 seats. There even is a SnowHotel in the snow castle, with double rooms and a honeymoon

suite. Also located in Kemi is the Gemstone Gallery, holding the most extensive collection of gemstones in Europe. Amongst others, the crown designed for the King of Finland in 1918 is on display and draws tourists.

Visitors of Finland might also want to go on an icebreaker cruise. The three- or four-hour cruises onboard the icebreaker Sampo go out into the Gulf of Bothnia where travellers can either walk on the sea ice or float in the water wearing a survival suit. Imagine the awesome experience of either floating effortlessly in the middle of the Arctic Sea or having your photo taken in front of the icebreaker at sea! The actual programme depends on the ice conditions; a guided tour all the way down to the engine rooms is always part of it.

Finland - where saunas and silence form vital parts of the culture - is a fascinating and inviting travel destination. Perhaps, our article has inspired your urge to travel? ●



You don't like the cold climes of Finland? You prefer white beaches under picturesque palm trees and crystal clear water glistening in the sun? So, what about the Caribbean? For a holiday in the blue paradise you can book your dialysis treatment in our Fresenius Medical Care Center. It is located in Willemstad, Curaçao.

Inquire about the procedure with your travel companion:
www.curacao-dialysis.com/





Portugal: a small country with grand plans for your health

Portugal has become a role model for national sports promotions. The measures taken have inspired NephroCare Portugal to implement an intradialytic exercise programme. What a great concept in a small country!

Portugal is a beautiful country with a massive problem. According to reports of the European Union, the Portuguese population is among the least active in Europe. This inactivity contributes significantly to the country's high rates of chronic diseases. The issue preoccupied the public organisations, the Directorate General of Health in particular. In an attempt to control this critical risk factor, they installed a National Programme for the Promotion of Physical Activity as a priority strategy.

Oriented towards this public health policy and scientific studies emphasising the im-

portance of physical exercise for haemodialysis patients, NephroCare Portugal followed the example and implemented an intradialytic exercise programme. The programme is the first of its kind on a national level, with more to follow.

Regular exercise promotes well-being

Dialysis patients are known to experience many barriers on their way towards increasing their level of physical activity. Among these obstacles are depression symptoms, lack of motivation and fatigue. The lack of time due to the time-consuming dialysis treatments is another limiting factor. That got

the team of NephroCare Portugal thinking. If the healthcare teams helped patients to exercise safely during dialysis, the patients could overcome several hurdles at once. By working out during dialysis, they would not have to spare extra time. Exercising with fellow patients might work as a key motivator,

*“This programme exists for YOU.
The teams are pleased to work
with partners like YOU.
Continue to help us improving
YOUR quality of life!”*

and fatigue often decreases after a while on the dialyser. On top of that, patients would improve their blood pressure and diabetes control (or prevention). They could counterbalance the loss of muscle mass and strength. Moreover, they could improve their exercise tolerance and, most importantly, their overall quality of life.

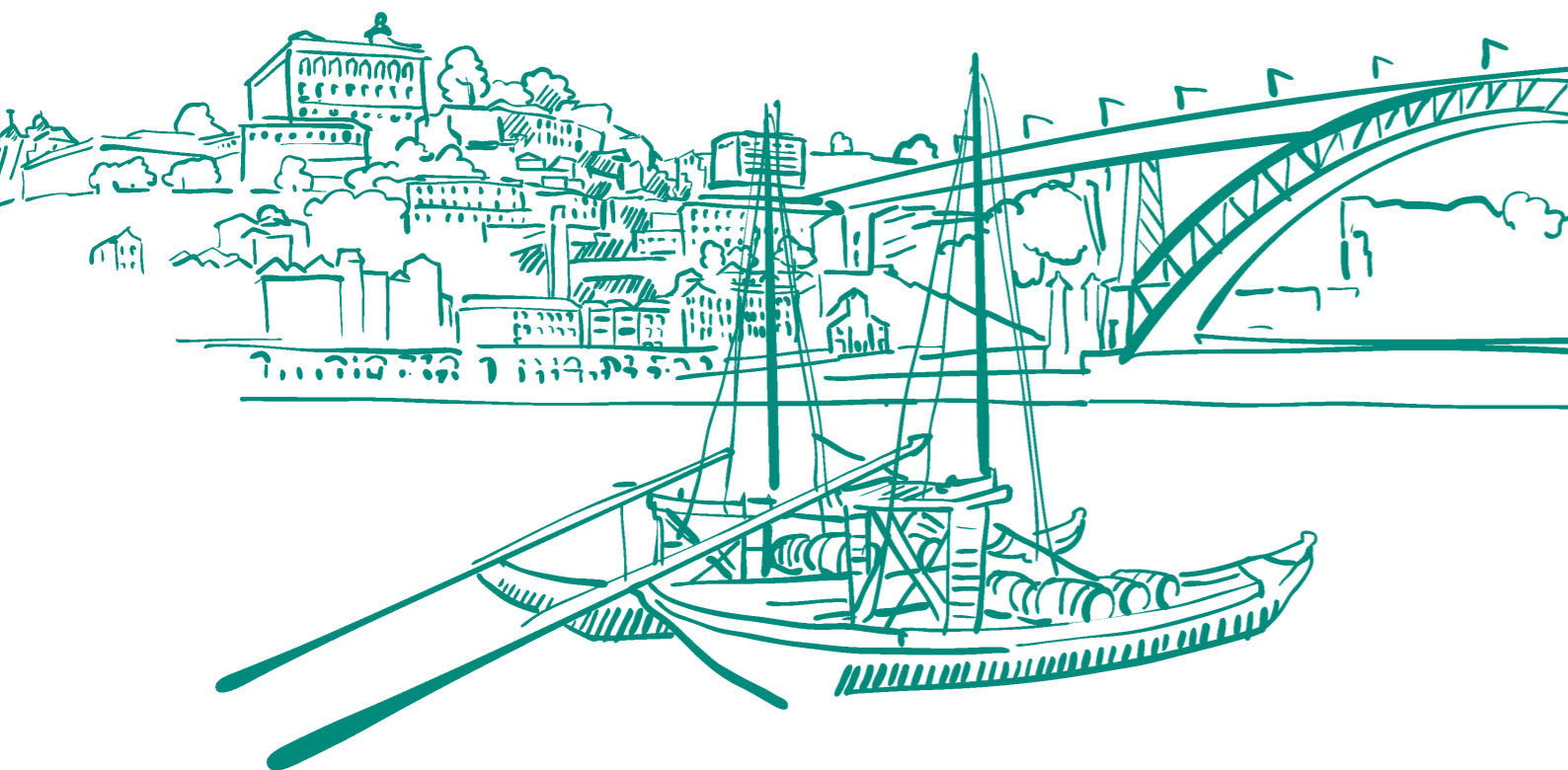
The programme was rapidly implemented and started in July 2014 as a pilot experience in a single dialysis unit. After a trial of two years, the exercise intervention was deemed safe, feasible and effective to improve the healthcare status of haemodialysis patients. So, in September 2016, the programme was expanded to other dialysis units and now features in 25 clinics. Approximately 500 patients exercise regularly during their treatment. The rapid expansion was only possible thanks to the commitment of the dialysis staff and the trust of the patients.



The programme mirrors the values and the team spirit of the NephroCare network. The team members worked as a patient-centered interdisciplinary team. This collaboration was needed to set up this programme. The spirit is mirrored in the proactive mindset, challenging the status quo. The team took the initiative, everybody wanting their work to impact on the patients' happiness and wellbeing. The reliability shows in their being trusted as a team and keeping what they promise. The patients' safety and health are the main goals of NephroCare groups worldwide.

The message of NephroCare Portugal is the following: “This programme exists for YOU. The teams are pleased to work with partners like YOU. Continue to help us improving YOUR quality of life!”

Thank you, NephroCare Portugal and everyone involved, for leading the way towards intradialytic exercise programmes. ●





Body and mind are one: How do you deal with your emotions?

Mental health is as important as physical health. A stable emotional state is all the more critical when physical health is impaired. It is good to know the signs of emotional distress and when to seek support. How are you coping?

For 25 years, R. A. has been a patient in the dialysis program of the Nefromed centre in Piatra Neamț, Romania. We want to begin this article with her story.

“Five years ago, I fell and fractured my pelvis. I was terrified of being paralysed. My fears intensified to such extent that I was later diagnosed with panic attacks caused by post-traumatic stress. I experienced a variety of symptoms such as anxiety, fear of darkness, fear of loneliness, insomnia, palpitations, hypertension. I also avoided being around other people.

Without cause, I had sudden occurrences of profuse sweating. I had lost my appetite. The fear of going insane was growing, a fear that I felt I could not share with anyone. The state of panic was almost permanent, mak-

ing it difficult to concentrate. My mind was constantly spinning.

After the fracture had healed, I visited different medical practitioners. I went to see a cardiologist, a neurologist, an endocrinologist. I so wanted to get out of this state, I even talked with a priest. The clinic’s psychologist recommended that I see a psychiatrist, but that seemed too strange.

A couple of days later, however, walking along a street, I noticed the sign of a psychiatrist’s cabinet. We shared the same first name. I took that as a sign and immediately decided to see a psychiatrist. What can I say? It proved to be the solution to my poor state.

A short while after starting the treatment advised by the psychiatrist, I began to sleep and eat again; I began to feel better and to see life with new eyes. I warmly recommend to anyone going through similar situations not to hesitate and talk to a psychiatrist.

It may be difficult to open up at first but I firmly suggest this, because now I understand the importance of psychiatric treatment. Moreover, the psychiatric treatment may consist of just small things, which – like in my case – can make significant changes.”

Mental health can affect physical health

Mental health is just as important as the health of any vital organ in our body, heart, kidneys, lungs, or any other. Patients undergoing dialysis can experience different levels of emotional struggle. Their thoughts often revolve around side effects and consequences of chronic kidney disease. They may also be exposed to a broad range of psychological stress symptoms that affect their mental state and, implicitly, their general quality of life.

Through these symptoms, the most frequent of which are fears, the emotional sufferings

described above can become more intense and complicated. It is also what happens when minor frustrations are magnified to burdensome dimensions. Such a development may generate problems of increasing degrees regarding psychological functions which may then even impair the patient’s treatment compliance.



Enjoy the small pleasures of life

Life is so much about taking pleasure in the little things around us. Listening to beautiful music, watching birds picking at seeds in the birdhouse in front of the window, investing oneself in a gratifying hobby or hearing the laughter of children – there is so much that ▶

can make us smile, bring some joy or a state of cheerful serenity. An awareness for moments like these is all the more important in times of illness. Take the time to see and hear what can warm your heart. Enjoyable moments are a balm for our soul.

How to discern mental symptoms

Take fears and recurring symptoms seriously, though, and do not hesitate to seek support. Consulting with a psychiatrist is just like seeing any other doctor. The psychiatrist evaluates the symptoms and mental state of the individual, and he is the only one capable of prescribing the medical treatment for improving psychological symptoms. A prolonged state of depression or anxiety can lead to sequelae and may result in the poor functioning or the dysfunction of some organs, as we have seen in the story of R. A. Most important of all: Stay optimistic! People around you are surely willing to help. Talk to your fellow patients, your nurses or your family and friends. You are not alone with your emotions. ●

References

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Mitrofan, Iolanda – Psihoterapie: Repere teoretice, metodologice si aplicative, Bucharest, SPER Publishing House, 2008

It is advisable to listen to your nephrologist or psychologist and see a psychiatrist if you or a person near you suffer from one or more of the symptoms below or from similar symptoms:

- ☹ negative, stressful or even catastrophic thoughts, at times,
- 😞 inactivity or hyperactivity,
- 😞 insomnia,
- 😞 constantly increasing irritability,
- 😞 a deep sadness that continues for a couple of days,
- 😞 constant suspicion through to paranoia,
- 😞 hostility or decreased tolerance to frustration with states of anger and aggressiveness,
- 😞 the presence of voices or images that other people do not perceive,
- 😞 a desire to hurt yourself or others,
- 😞 poor memory or poor concentration.



Spirituality as our lifeline in times of illness

Faith and spirituality can also be great sources for strength to guide us through difficult times. In the NephroCare Centre Nedral in Naples, for example, Father Benito made a strong impression on patients and clinical staff.

A haemodialysis patient himself, the priest reached out to the people at the NephroCare centre despite his own discomfort. One of his fellow patients, who is proud of having befriended the priest, remembers his amazing commitment:

“During the Christmas holidays, Father Benito celebrated the Eucharistic for each dialysis session. The most moving one, in my opinion, being the celebration after his own haemodialysis session. Both the resulting spirit and the energy were almost tangible. In managing to celebrate the Eucharist there

with us, Father Benito reached our souls with a few simple and effective concepts. His faith and conviction in pursuing his ministry brought us closer to Christ. The honour of being a witness to his strength of mind filled me deeply. Tears and emotion welled up, making me feel like a little child in that moment of so much humility. The experience became a real life lesson for personal growth that I will certainly not forget easily. I will retrieve it in times of discouragement. I want to share this special memory with you, as it had a heartfelt impact on most of those present at the Nedral centre in those days.” ●





Indulge yourself! Sport improves your well-being

Do you take pleasure in doing sports? Regular exercise involves zest for life, keeps people fit and promotes better health. This also applies to patients suffering from a chronic illness like chronic kidney disease. Still, not every sport is equally suitable for all patients. How can sport improve your well-being?

For years it has been well-known that exercise for chronically ill patients can improve physical efficiency. This results in an improved general condition and emotional balance, thus increasing the quality of life. Long-term endurance training stimulates the fat metabolism and improves the muscle's sugar utilisation. The advantage for the patient is a reduction of fat mass. Moreover, increased blood pressure values decrease and endurance increases.

Additionally, more power and coordination are afforded and flexibility is trained. Furthermore, exercise increases your social circle, you meet friends and can enjoy life and activities together. Social contact can help both the patients and relatives to cope with the burdens associated with chronic disease.

Do what you like

Usually, there are a lot of sports dialysis patients can perform, of course following their physician's advice. Moderate forms of sport and exercise are best for you. Most suitable is an endurance sport, such as walking, cycling, swimming, hiking, cross-country skiing, gymnastics or even water gymnastics. Please note: Even walking short distances instead of using a car, or getting off the bus one stop earlier, or going shopping help to train your body!

One of the most essential pieces of advice we can give: Do what you like! There is a broad scope of opportunities waiting. Here are a couple of suggestions:

Take a daily **walk** for at least 20 minutes regardless of the weather conditions. The length and slope of the way should be adapted to your exercise capacity. Become aware of your body, breathe in the fresh air and stay curious about what happens around you. There is so much to see! **Hiking** is like walking, it just takes you farther from home. Also, it is an ideal leisure activity for meeting kindred spirits. **Nordic Walking** needs a bit of instruction. It is a perfect endurance workout and fat burner as it gets your cardiovascular system pumping and boosts your metabolism. On top of that, it is easy on the joints.





Speaking of relieving the joints, **cycling** is the go-to sport. It meets all the criteria mentioned above while supporting the weight. This makes it recommendable for elderly and overweight persons. Your bike might need a check-up once in a while, though, just like its rider.

Swimming gives excellent blood circulation to your legs and strengthens the blood vessels and the respiratory muscles. **Gymnastics** help you to strengthen and stretch your muscles while you get more flexible. You can increase the intensity of the exercises by de-

grees, which makes it very advisable for everybody who has not been active for a while.

Enjoy your exercise, perhaps in the company of others, have fun in the fresh air and: keep moving! ●

BEFORE YOU START EXERCISING, PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

-  Consult your attending physician or nephrologist before engaging in regular physical exercise.
-  Protect your vascular access while exercising, for example with a special bandage.
-  Start slowly but surely, especially after times of little physical activity.
-  Training in body perception, like yoga and breathing therapy, is good for many patients and helps to dilute tensions.





Autumn Crumble

When the first chilly hints announce that winter is just round the corner, we like to keep warm and cosy indoors. Is there a better opportunity to enjoy our autumn crumble?

Seasonal fruit remind us of the harvesting period and tempt the taste buds while being low in potassium and phosphorus.



Serves 4

Ingredients

- 140 g flour
- 75 g brown sugar
- 1 packet vanilla sugar
- 70 g butter
- 2 pears
- 2 apples
- cinnamon



Work with your hands in a bowl the flour, brown sugar and butter to get a sandy dough. Peel pears and apples and cut into small pieces. Spread the fruit at the bottom of a dish and cover it with the crumble topping. Sprinkle with vanilla sugar and cinnamon. Bake at 200°C (Th 7) for 30 minutes until the crust is golden brown. ●

Nutritional values per serving:

Energy	411 kcal
Fat	15 g
Sodium	3.8 mg
Carbohydrates	64 g
Protein	4 g
Phosphorus	45 mg
Potassium	236 mg
Liquid	118 mg



TIP: Impress your family and let them rediscover a gourmet dessert with all the flavour of seasonal fruit. This recipe meets your nutritional needs because it is low in potassium, phosphorus and salt (traces).



Breast of duck with bread dumplings

Winter is the season that sends the big fowl on our dinner table. Many people prepare a goose at Christmas or turkey for Thanksgiving. Ducks make a delicious roast throughout the winter. The meat is tender and less fat than either geese or turkey. Enjoy our duck breast on a cold day and let its enticing aroma stroke your nose.



Serves 4

Ingredients

Duck breast:

500 g duck breast
1 tablespoon rapeseed oil
pepper

Bread dumplings:

250 g bread rolls, diced
100 g apples, peeled and grated
25 g onions, finely diced
1 teaspoon butter
125 ml water
125 ml cream (30 % fat)
½ tablespoon cooking starch
2 eggs
5 g sugar
½ teaspoon cream of tartar baking powder
50 ml milk
nutmeg, pepper
50 g chopped walnuts



Place the duck breasts flesh side down and score the fat layer with a knife to stop them from shrinking when fried. Pre-heat the oven to 180° C (hot air circulation). Using very little oil, fry the breasts on the skin side and then on the flesh side. Season with pepper and fry again briefly. Then roast the breasts in the oven at 180°C for approx. 3-4 minutes. Once cooked, switch off the oven and with the oven door open allow the meat to rest, so that it will lose less liquid when cut. It will also taste juicier!

Mix together the diced bread rolls and grated apple. Melt the butter in a pan and sweat the diced onions in it. Mix the starch with 125 g cold water and the cream and combine with the onions. Pour the resulting warm liquid over the diced bread rolls.

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C (hot air circulation). Separate the eggs. Combine the yolks with the sugar, cream of tartar baking powder and 50 g milk and add to the bread roll mixture. Beat the egg whites to a foam and add carefully to the dumpling mixture. Shape the dumplings to an appropriate size, place in a baking dish and bake at 180°C for 20-25 minutes. ●



TIP: Breast of duck goes very well with creamed savoy cabbage or red cabbage.

Nutritional values per serving:	
Energy	607 kcal
Fat	37 g
Sodium	443 mg
Carbohydrates	35 g
Protein	34 g
Phosphorus	488 mg
Potassium	590 mg
Liquid	216 mg



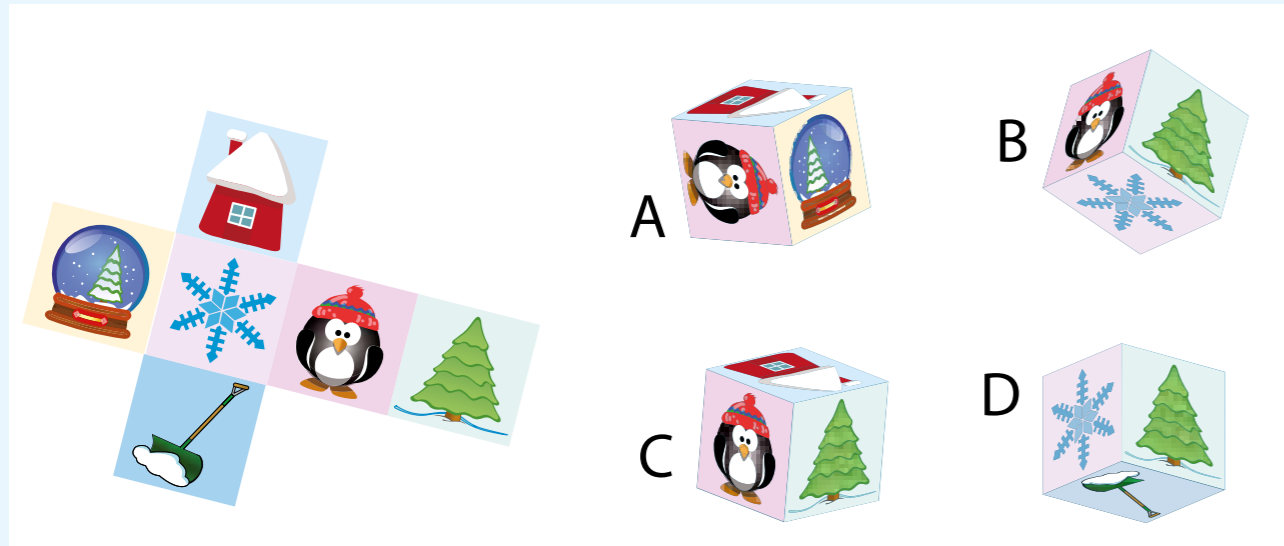
Brain calisthenics

Stretch your mind with these challenging brain teasers.

Whether you do them in a group or with others, remember the most important part: **having fun!**

CUBE PUZZLE

Which of the cubes A to D has been folded from the original?



ORIGINAL AND FORGERY

The two photos differ in ten details. Can you discover them?

- 1.
- 2.



SYMBOL-SUDOKU

The 6 different symbols must be distributed in each box of this symbol oddity so that they appear only once in each row and column.

TWINS

Only two of the images are exactly the same. What are they?

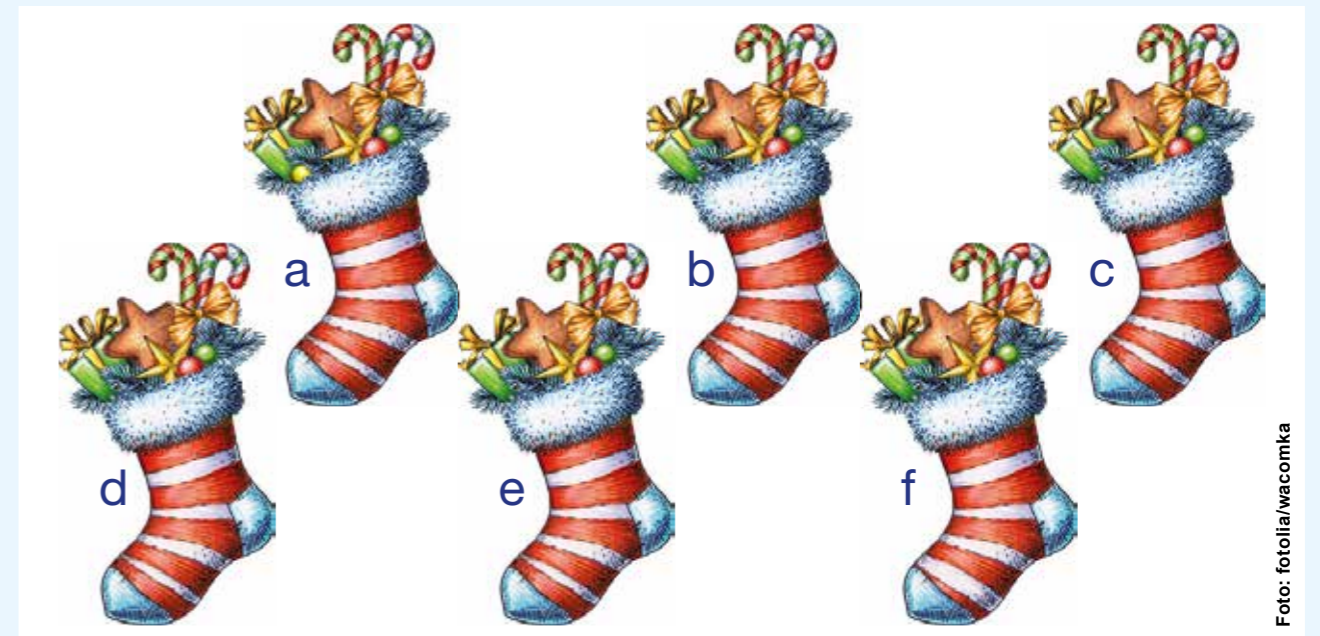


Foto: fotolia/wacomka

Brain calisthenics solutions





































CUBE PUZZLE

The cube C was folded from the original.

TWINS

Picture **b** and **c** are exactly the same.

SYMBOL-SUDOKU

ORIGINAL AND FORGERY



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