**Spring into Salads**
By: Dr. Alyssa Musgrove

Our bodies require a rainbow of nutrients for optimal health, and eating a variety of colors is one way to achieve this fundamental health goal. It can be easy to fall into the same eating routine once you find foods the entire family likes, but the truth is our bodies benefit from food variation. Children, especially, need a diversity of foods in their diets and adults benefit, as well.

Eating an assortment of colored fruits and vegetables is the best way to receive a complete range of the vitamins and minerals your body needs in order to function. Each fruit and vegetable has a distinctive color that indicates an abundance of unique nutrients. The range of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals in fruits and vegetables have enormous healing powers that can help our bodies thrive.

This week, try buying a new fruit or vegetable that is not usually on your shopping list and find a way to incorporate it into a meal. Below are a two of my favorite nutrient-dense salad recipes to help you get started.

**Best Healthy, No-Mayo Slaw***Courtesy of ambitiouskitchen.com*

**For the slaw:**
1 medium head of purple cabbage, shredded
2 heaping cups shredded carrots
¾ cup finely chopped cilantro
1 jalapeño, seeded and finely diced
½ cup toasted sliced almonds (or sub chopped roasted almonds)
1/4 cup roasted sunflower seeds or pepitas
Optional: ½ cup diced scallions (the green part only of the green onion)

**For the dressing:**
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
½ teaspoon salt
Freshly cracked black pepper

Add all the ingredients for the slaw except for the almonds and sunflower seeds to a large bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together all the ingredients for the dressing. Pour all over the slaw and toss well to combine. Taste and adjust seasonings as necessary. Cover and place in fridge for at least an hour to allow flavors to marinate together. Before serving, sprinkle with toasted sliced almonds and sunflower seeds or pepitas; toss again and serve.

**Chopped Kale Power Salad with Lemon Tahini Dressing***Courtesy of shelikesfood.com*

**For the salad:**2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and diced (you should get about 5–6 cups)
2 teaspoons + 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
3/4 teaspoons salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 bunch of curly kale, washed, stem removed and chopped (you should get 7–8 cups)
Juice of 1/2 a large lemon
1 (15 ounce) can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1 large avocado, pitted and diced
1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/3 cup chopped almonds
1/4 cup chopped red onion

**For the dressing:**1/2 cup tahini
Juice of 1 large lemon
1/4 teaspoon salt
3–6 tablespoons warm water, depending on how thick you want the dressing

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. On a large sheet pan, toss together the diced sweet potato with 2 teaspoons olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon of pepper. Bake sweet potato until fork tender, 35-40 minutes, flipping once.

Prepare the kale while the sweet potatoes are baking. Add the chopped kale to a large bowl with 1 tablespoon olive oil, juice of 1/2 a large lemon and a heaping 1/4 teaspoon salt. Use your hands to massage the kale and make sure everything is mixed together, about 1 minute. Set kale aside until sweet potatoes are finished baking.

Make the dressing by adding all ingredients to a bowl and whisking until a creamy dressing is formed. Add the water slowly until desired consistency is reached.

There are two ways you can assemble the salad: You can add all ingredients to the bowl with the kale and mix until combined. Add desired amount of dressing to each individual serving. Or, you can add the kale mixture to separate bowls and evenly top with remaining ingredients.

\*\*If making a big batch for a party or for packed lunches it works best to mix all ingredients together in a large bowl. If having people over for lunch and serving them individually, it might work better to evenly distribute the kale and then top with remaining ingredients.

\*\*Leave the dressing separate and add it just before eating. This salad will keep well in the refrigerator for about 5 days.

*Pathways to Healing specializes in holistic chiropractic care. Dr. Alyssa Musgrove draws on a variety of techniques, including chiropractic, kinesiology, nutrition, food allergy testing and lifestyle counseling to assist clients in achieving optimal health and wellness in one setting. Pathways to Healing is located at 1022 Founders Row, Lake Oconee Village, Greensboro. The office can be reached at 706-454-2040.*