

## For Immediate Release:

The mission of K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is to link education with life experiences to help people improve their lives, their families and their communities. Family and Consumer Sciences professionals support essential life skills including Community Development, Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Leadership & Volunteer Development, Relationship Development and Resource Management.

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## Summer Salads

When some people hear the word “salad,” they think of a small bowl of leafy greens and creamy dressing that must be struggled through before the arrival of their steak or chicken. While a salad often precedes the main course in restaurants, a salad can also serve as the main course – or the only course. Chefs, dietitians, even bloggers and “foodies” are taking on salads these days, and pushing them in new directions.



There are four healthy reasons for adding more salads to our nutrition plan:

- **Fiber** — “Most of us don't get enough fiber in our diet, and it works together with exercise to keep our digestive systems healthy and prevent some of the common chronic diseases of the day, including cancer.
- **Phytonutrients** — These natural, plant-derived chemicals aren't as critical as vitamins and minerals, but things like carotenoids and flavonoids help make us resistant to diseases and can slow down the aging process.
- **“Volumetrics”** — If you're one of those people that could stand to shed a few pounds, a properly designed salad can help you do this. The concept of volumetrics is that by eating larger portions of healthy foods, you'll feel more satisfied.
- **Great source of “smart fats”** — We often think of “fat” as something that should be avoided in our diets, but not all fats are equal. Plant-based fats such as olive oil, nuts and seeds are good fats, and it's not uncommon to find them in a salad.

When a salad becomes a main course, protein frequently becomes part of the lineup. While chicken and steak are popular options, protein doesn't have to be limited to meat. Eggs, cheeses, nuts and seeds can deliver protein to a salad. Quinoa ("KEEN-wah") is a protein rich grain that can be served warm or chilled, after it's been cooked. It adds crunch as well as protein to a salad.

One of the newest trends in brown-bagging salad is an old standby from your grandmother's kitchen: the Mason jar or canning jar. The beauty of the Mason jar salad is that dressing goes in the bottom, followed by whatever ingredients you choose — you can see each layer and portion them out. Add the leafy greens last, screw on the lid, and then it's easy to transport. Give it a good shake when it's time to eat.

Salads are really nice way to widen people's thoughts about what vegetables can be. Not necessarily cooked and hot all the time — those cold, crisp bite-sized vegetables can be really welcoming on a warm summer's day.

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Our website is <http://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/> or follow us on Facebook: Wildcat Extension District.

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