



Strength in Plants *By Kate Murray*

It's still true: You are what you eat

Start out this year by ditching all the packaged and processed food in your pantry. Be intentional about shopping for the colors of the rainbow. Eating fruits, vegetables and beans that have naturally beautiful color usually means they are also high in natural antioxidants. Some cold weather choices that easily can be found through the winter months include kale and cranberries. In this salad, I'm using pomegranate with oranges and arugula. Eating arugula is a great way to stimulate proper digestion as it is rich in phytochemicals.

Arugula Salad

INGREDIENTS

1 bunch of arugula
1 pomegranate, seeded
1 orange, peeled and sliced
Top with a sprinkle of goat cheese and a good, aged, dark balsamic vinegar



Arugula salad with oranges and cranberries.

SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE: KATE MURRAY

NOW THAT the season for indulgence is over, it's time to renew your focus on the important connections between mind, body, and spirit. (And I'm not just talking about exercise!)

The holidays can feel stressful, and sometimes we'll even crave the simplicity of getting back to a regular routine come January. The kids go back to school, we focus on our work and our philanthropy, and we organize our resolutions in the first quarter of the new year. This year, I want you to

forget about everything you've heard about dieting and focus on your lifestyle. My version of a healthy and active lifestyle includes cleansing your body, mind and spirit, and it doesn't include scary products or meal plans, just clean, pure food, and a little bit of intentional quiet time.

The foods most of us eat, known as the Standard American Diet, typically contain high levels of unhealthy fats, added sugars and refined grains. These rich foods can throw off the normal pH of our bodies,

setting us off in a downward spiral of weight gain, stress and fatigue.

On the pH scale, a score of 7 is neutral. Anything lower is considered an acid, and anything higher is considered an alkali. To alkalize your body, it's best to focus on eating whole, plant-based foods rather than packaged snacks and commercially prepared foods. A little fresh lemon juice squeezed into your water every day will even help promote immune system strength and increase your body's ability to fight off illness.

The antioxidants found in plant-based foods such as arugula activate enzymes in your liver that can help your body get rid of everything it doesn't need, and thus improve your energy level and help you feel well overall. The connections between what you eat and your overall health really are astounding.

If you become mindful of your food choices, the natural healing of your body can occur. Consider adding in some intentional time each day to quiet your mind and you'll be on your way toward a healthy lifestyle in 2016. ☺

Kate Murray is certified in plant-based nutrition and the author of "A Silent Cure in My Back Yard." Find more recipes at: asilentcure.org.



THE SOUND ROOM - a joint project of the Reading Eagle, WEEU Broadcasting Company and Pretzel City Productions - is an intimate studio space that has been created in the Fourth and Court streets headquarters of WEEU 830 AM, Berks County's only locally owned radio station.

Local and national musicians - including artists that have appeared at Berks Jazz Fest and Berks Country Fest - perform miniconcerts that are recorded and archived for posterity.

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Contact
Andrew Roulston at
aroulston@weeu.com