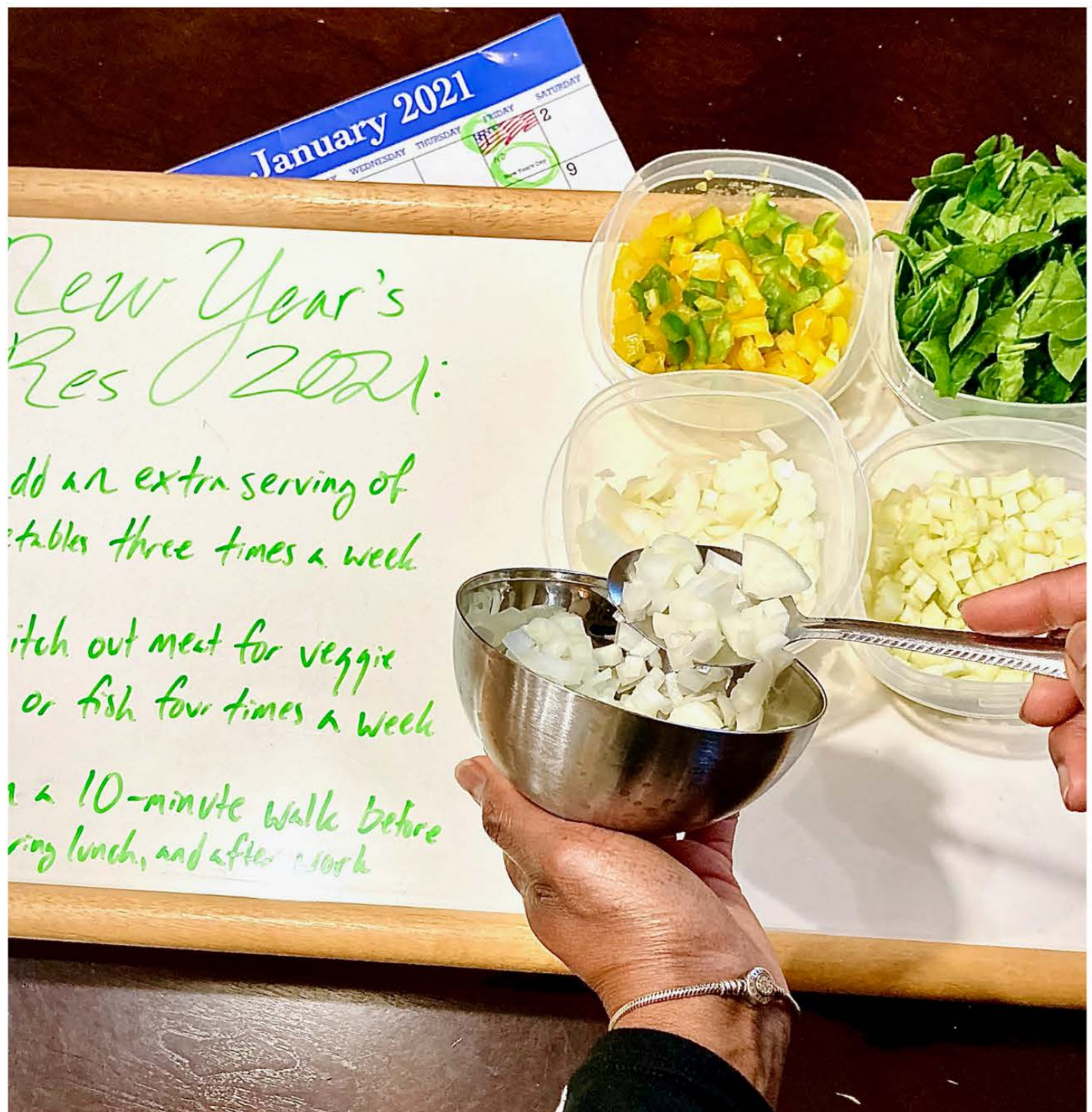


JANURARY 2021

# NUTRI NEWS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA  
THE DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS





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## UNF UPDATES

# COVID CORNER



By Laura Rodgers



The new spring semester is finally here, which means we've made it through fall and are now remote learning professionals. A survey of both students and faculty members was taken to gauge general feelings about this past fall semester.

Ø **None of the survey participants** attended any in-person classes, while a few attended on-campus events.

Ø **Enjoyment of remote teaching/learning** was surprisingly even, with about half answering yes and half no. Several responders had indifferent feelings

Ø **Change in academic success** regarding remote learning is divided among the students and faculty. Students found it more challenging and difficult to learn online, while faculty did not notice a change in grades from on-campus semesters.

Ø **Satisfaction with remote class interactions** was divided among the faculty, while most students were not pleased with the experience



Ø **Impact on mental health** was passionately expressed by students as being negative. Meanwhile, most faculty members did not find themselves changed during the remote learning process.

Ø **Returning to campus** with the proper COVID precautions was an easy answer for most students: yes. However, almost the entire faculty responded with a preference to continue remote learning, even though many did not enjoy online teaching and interactions.

**These responses show** that students want to return to campus and learn. This isn't to say that faculty members do not want to come back and teach us; perhaps they are taking a more cautious approach to this situation than we eager students are. We all want to get back into our regular routines, but we need to remember that it is not how the world is right now. Wearing a mask is the new normal, and we have to remember to keep up our COVID safety practices if we want to get back to campus and regain a sense of routine. Let's all work together (but six feet apart) to minimize cases and keep our campus open. It's up to us.



*STAY SAFE  
OSPREYS!*

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# **Is there a Link Between Nutrition and Mental Health**

**by Tammy Coa**



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**There has always been a theory that mental health and nutrition are interlinked with one another. For example, if a person is eating healthy, they may be more likely to improve their mental health. Meanwhile, if a person is not eating a well-balanced diet, they are more likely to suffer from harm done to their mental health. In fact, the disciplinary field of nutritional psychiatry has developed research in response to the relationship. However, could it be the other way around? if a person is diagnosed with psychiatric disorders can they be resolved from a healthier diet?**

**This became an interesting subject that addresses both psychological and nutritional fields as the studies and statistics are often complex to interpret. As a few people are aware of the connection, depression is often viewed in society as either biochemically-based or emotionally-rooted. However, nutrition plays a key role in emotions such as eating habits, which include the desire for certain foods, poor appetite, skipping meals, overeating, or odd eating schedules. In fact, psychiatric patients diagnosed with depression often have inadequate nutritional intake as demonstrated in their poor eating choices and habits.**

**Eating well may be associated with feeling good both mentally and physically as it was more common in people who ate diets rich in**

**vegetables and fruits. A study found that followers of the Mediterranean diet that consumed more fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes were more likely to not have signs of depression. In fact, a poor diet could lead to deteriorating physical health which reflects in self-esteem, an important aspect of one's mental health.**

**Furthermore, a survey found that nearly one in six people are diagnosed with a mental health disease. Many people ignore the fact that nutrition plays an important role. Although it has not been fully understood through research, it is important to consider the term 'food for thought'. Some ways to improve mental health include developing healthy eating patterns through gentle nutrition, seeing a therapist, and seeing a nutrition counselor that specializes in specific disorders such as eating disorders or alcohol abuse.**

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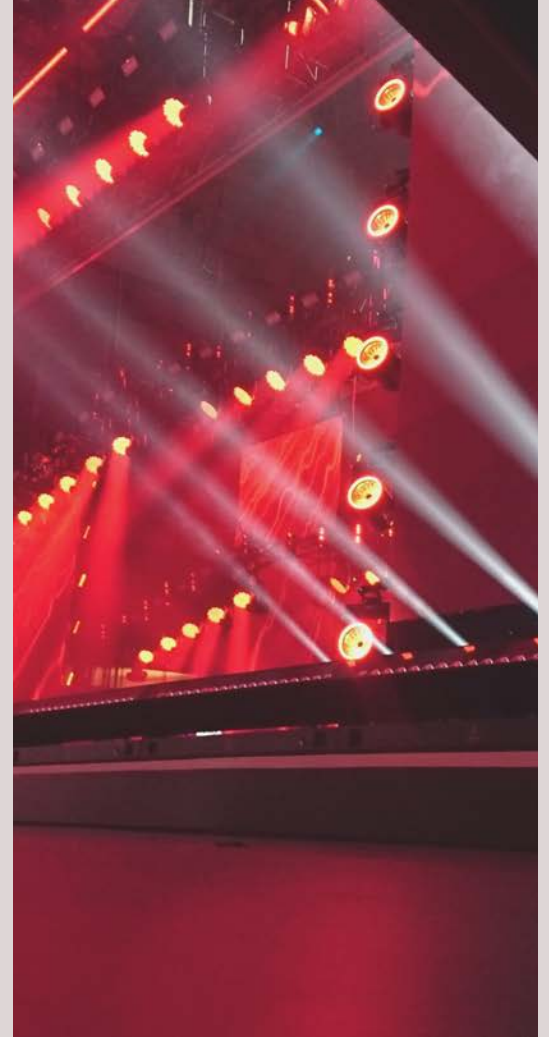
**Program is 100 percent online, full or part time**

## Earn your Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics online.

The online MS in Nutrition and Dietetics Non-Internship Program is a distance learning degree for those students who wish to emphasize the application of advanced nutrition knowledge in clinical or community-based health programs. This is a 35-semester hour program with four concentrations: Professional Studies in Dietetics, Nutritional Sciences, Global Health and Healthcare Informatics. Applicants interested in Professional Studies in Dietetics must have a baccalaureate degree in nutrition or a verification statement from an ACEND-accredited program. Applicants interested in the Nutritional Science, Global Health or Healthcare Informatics concentrations must have a baccalaureate degree in nutrition or a related area from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or its equivalent from a foreign institution.



**Nutrition and Dietetics  
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Happy New Year, everyone! I wanted to start this new year by highlighting one of our bright students in the Nutrition and Dietetics Program. Meet Payton Turner; she is a senior in the nutrition program who likes to be physically active and active in her community as Miss All-American. Payton is also the Volunteer Opportunities Chair for Nutrition Journal Club. Read along to learn more about Payton and her journey as a Nutrition and Dietetics student.

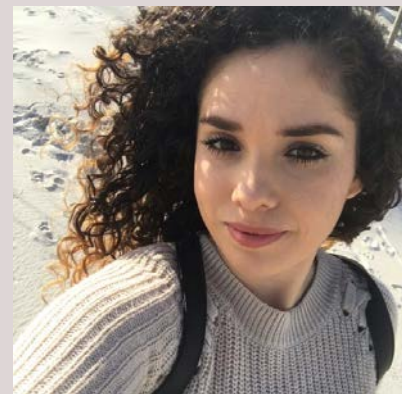
**KG:** What inspired you to pursue a degree in Nutrition and Dietetics?

**PT:** My grandfather has always had heart issues. The first time I saw him have a heart attack, I was almost six years old. He had multiple heart attacks in the years following this, and currently has 17 stents. One of, if not THE, biggest reason he is still alive and well today is because he changed his eating habits. He began to learn as much as he could about nutrition, and so did I. I watched his surgeries from viewing rooms with

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

### MEET PAYTON TURNER!

INTERVIEWED BY  
KARLA GUERRA





the permission of his surgeons, attended doctor visits with him, and made healthy dishes with him. These combined experiences ignited a passion for nutrition within me that I wanted to pursue.

**KG: What activities or hobbies do you enjoy doing outside of school?**

**PT:** I love being as active as possible! I love hiking on trails, preserves, and in the woods. I am a lifeguard during the swim season, so I love swimming with my family and coworkers. My family works out together every day, and my grandparents and I have been growing our own food and in our garden for a while now. I am particularly into growing native crops, these days. I am the current Miss All-American right now, so I try to stay very active in my community.

**KG: Can you believe it is a new year? What are you most looking forwards to in the year of 2021?**

**PT:** I cannot! What I am looking forward to most in 2021 is starting a new chapter in my life as a post-grad adult. I will be graduating in April 2021, so I have been thinking hard

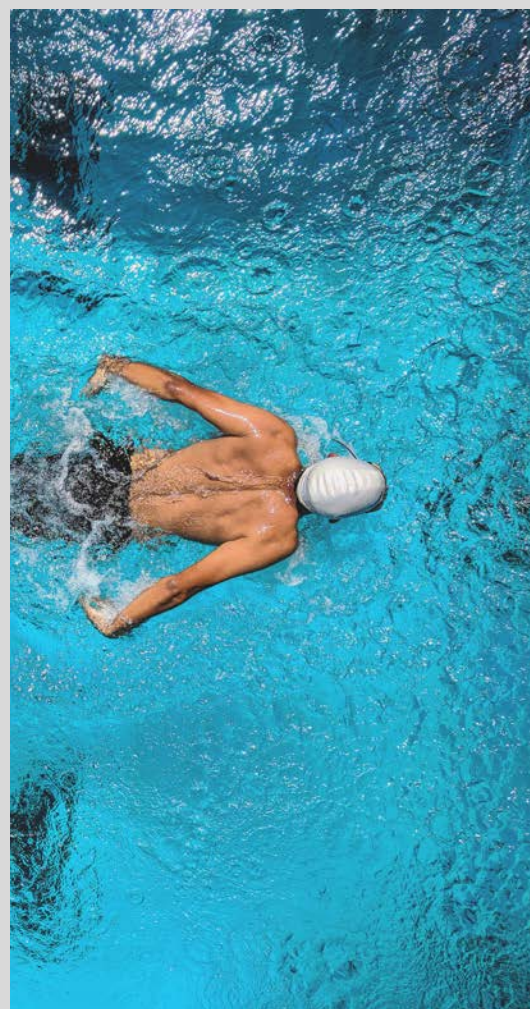
on how I plan to apply the many lessons I have learned throughout my college years into the beginning of my career!

**KG: What can you tell us about your officer positions in the Nutrition Journal Club?**

**PT:** I have served as the Volunteer Opportunities Chair for NJC for a semester now, and it has been my first chance to dip my toe into research interpretation outside of the classroom. I have learned so much about how to identify what can be improved in a study, how different factors can impact results, and how to educate others on these aspects in a digestible way. As a Chair, I have been amazed at how many volunteer opportunities there are for Nutrition students in our community. No matter what path a student chooses to take, there are places where they can gain experience and see where their career may lead.

**KG: What advice do you have for upcoming students entering the nutrition program?**

**PT:** One bad assignment,



exam, or even semester does not mean you are hopeless. I had two of the worst semesters of my life, both personally and academically, when I entered this program. So many people doubted me and even told me to quit- I thought my dream was over, and I felt like a failure. THAT'S when you become hopeless. Look back at where things went sour and learn from it. Reinvent yourself if you must. Restructure the way you study, the way you work, the way you learn, with your previous experiences in mind, and Keep. Moving. Forward. As long as you can do that, you are never hopeless.

**KG:** What plans and goals do you have after graduation?

**PT:** I have high hopes for myself! After graduation, I plan to earn my Master's in either Nutrition or Public Health remotely while being enrolled in culinary school. Once I graduate from both, I plan to commission into the U.S. Air Force and attend medical school with the goal of becoming a Flight Surgeon.

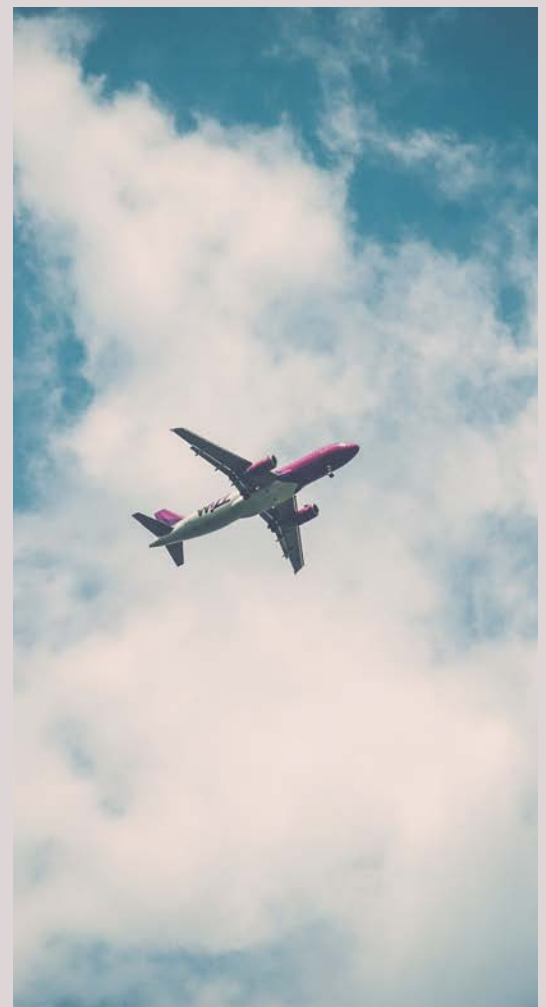
**KG:** What is your current favorite snack?

**PT:** I eat chilled kimchi by the bowlful! I am all about gut health and I looove crunchy, spicy pickles, so being able to have the best of both worlds is everything.

**KG:** Do you have a favorite inspiring quote or mantra that you live by and would like to share with others?

**PT:**

**“We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change...the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn.”**







# Folic Acid's Role in Preventing Birth Defects



BY CHLOE MORGAN

Enjoying a balanced, nutritious diet is a critical part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle for men, women, and children alike. Moreover, when a new baby enters the equation, it becomes even more beneficial. Pregnancy can be not only an exciting time in a woman's life but also a time of confusion and uncertainty. While it might seem as though there is an endless amount of advice for expecting parents, doctors have refined recommendations throughout the years, and now stick to unanimous guidelines regarding prenatal health.

Most women are aware they should not consume alcohol, smoke, or use certain medications while expecting, but it is also equally important to follow dietary guidelines and take prenatal supplements when diet alone is not enough. Here's why:



Diet, particularly vitamin deficiency, is associated with the risk of birth defects. In particular, folic acid has shown to reduce the risk of Neural-tube defects. Neural-tube defects (NTDs) are common and serious congenital abnormalities of the central nervous system. Neural-tube defects typically occur in the first weeks of pregnancy, often before pregnancy is detected. Folic acid helps form the neural tube, which eventually becomes the brain, spinal cord, and backbone. The CDC recommends that all women, even those who are not planning to become pregnant, take preventative measures against NTDs because there is often no cure for severe cases of these birth defects. This can be accomplished by consuming 400mcg to 600mcg of folic acid daily. Folate, the natural form of folic acid, also known as vitamin B9, can be found in common foods such as leafy green vegetables, eggs, beans, and orange juice. However, it can be difficult to obtain the recommended daily amount, therefore dietary supplements containing folic acid are advised. The Food and Drug Administration takes this into account and now requires breads, flours, and other grain products to be enriched with folic acid. Since the advent of mandatory folic acid fortification in 1998, neural tube birth defects have dropped by 28%, and studies have shown that far fewer people have low levels of folate in their blood.

Emphasis remains on prenatal vitamins and dietary supplements with good reason. Even when eating vegetables and fruits regularly, maintaining an adequate diet that provides 400mcg of folic acid per day can be challenging. Prenatal vitamins provide the recommended daily dose of folic acid which can aid in the prevention of neural-tube defects such as anencephaly and spina bifida.



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# **JANUARY IS BIRTH DEFECT PREVENTION MONTH**

## **TIPS TO PREVENT BIRTH DEFECTS**



Don't Smoke  
or  
Drink Alcohol

Be sure to take  
400 mcg of  
Folic acid every day

Before you get pregnant,  
try to reach a healthy  
weight

**To learn more about birth defects  
please visit  
[www.cdc.gov/birthdefects](http://www.cdc.gov/birthdefects)**

# Effect of vitamin C on the common cold:

## A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL



BY: MELISSA BRENNAN

The start of fall and winter is accompanied by the start of cold and flu season. Luckily, it also marks citrus fruit season! Citrus fruits are high in vitamin C and are often associated with maintaining a healthy immune system. A group of researchers decided to delve deeper into the effects of vitamin C on common colds by conducting a 5-year randomized clinical trial. The study included 439 participants, with two experimental groups receiving vitamin C supplements: 144 participants received a 50mg Vitamin C supplement and another group received a 500 mg supplement. Just for reference, the Recommended Dietary Allowance for adults aged 19 and older is 90mg a day for men and 75 mg a day for women, with additional vitamin C needed for pregnant and lactating women, and smokers.

The researchers found that the total number of common colds that occurred in the 50mg supplemental group was 21.3 out of 1000 and the number that occurred in the 500mg supplemental group was 17.1 out of 1000.

While there was no reduction in the severity or duration of the common cold, the researchers did find that those who consumed vitamin C supplements had significantly fewer colds than the groups who did not.

Therefore, it was found that supplementing with vitamin C daily can significantly reduce the frequency of common colds, giving it a preventive effect. According to Sasazuki et al these findings should be interpreted with caution due to several limitations. This study allows for more curiosity around long-term effects of vitamin C supplementation.







Winter is the perfect time to include a variety of fresh citrus fruits in your diet including lemons, limes, oranges, and grapefruit. Citrus fruits tend to be inexpensive and a very healthful way of ensuring you meet your recommended vitamin C intake. It is important to note that some medications can be impacted by grapefruit consumption, so speak with your doctor and dietician about any possible interactions.

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# The Lunch Box

## Back to School Lunch

By: Samantha Dill



The phrase “back to school” is usually associated with the start of the school year in August, but now students are legitimately returning to the physical buildings of school come January. Depending on the specific school, classes are entirely in-person, hybrid, or all online.

Packing and bringing lunch from home appears to be the safest food option for now. Regardless of the source of the meal, hand washing/sanitizing, disinfecting, and wiping down surfaces is encouraged before digging in.

This sense of protection can apply to a lunch box as well. Reusable metal or plastic containers are a reliable choice and they often come with reusable silverware. The containers can be labeled and stowed to minimize additional touching. Bento boxes in particular house several compartments within one container to store and separate food. As for the food itself, keeping fruits and vegetables fresh is another concern. To do so, either keep produce whole if possible and if slicing is necessary, such as in the case of apples, soak in water to prevent drying out.

The Bento box’s Asian origin is the inspiration for the following spring roll recipe.



# Recipe: Vietnamese Spring Rolls

## Ingredients

- Spring Roll
- Rice paper
- Rice noodles
- Sesame oil
- Sea salt
- Carrots, cut into matchsticks
- Cabbage, thinly sliced
- Cucumber, julienned
- Green onions
- Cilantro
- Mint

## Peanut Sauce

- 1/3 cup of peanut butter
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 “fingers” of ginger
- Water as needed

## Recipe

1. Cook rice noodles according to the instructions on the package then toss in sesame oil and salt.
2. Fill a shallow pan with approximately an inch of water to soak the sheets of rice paper. Use at least two to provide structure to the roll. Remove from the pan once the sheet appears clear and pliable.
3. While the rice sheet is soaking, cut carrots into matchsticks, julienne cucumbers, and thinly slice cabbage. Loosely chop cilantro and mint and combine with cut up green onion.
4. Once the sheets are ready, lay on a flat surface to place the contents into the wrapping. Starting with a small portion of rice noodles.
5. Direct the vegetable contents to the center of the wrap. Then, sprinkle with the herb mixture.
6. Roll up the wrap in a similar fashion to fixing a burrito.
7. Whisk up the ingredients of the peanut sauce in a small bowl and add water as needed.
8. Dip the roll in the sauce and enjoy!

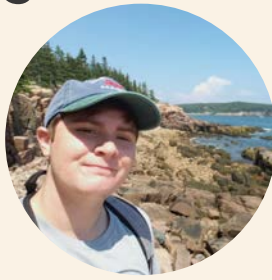
## Citation

Taylor K. Fresh Spring Rolls with Peanut Sauce. Cookie + Kate. Published August 20, 2019. Accessed November 18, 2020.  
<https://cookieandkate.com/fresh-spring-rolls-recipe/>



# Parsnips: More Than a White Carrot

BY CAMERON GLOVER



The cold winter months are the best time to find root vegetables like carrots, radishes, beets, and one of my favorites: parsnips. If you've walked through the produce cooler recently you might have seen what appears to be a white carrot, typically sold in small, clear bags that weight about a pound. These are parsnips, they're an often underappreciated winter vegetable that has sweet and subtle flavor, with a satisfying crunch just like carrots. Interestingly, parsnips share the same family as both carrots and parsley.

From my experience, parsnips have a much more fibrous texture, with a less pronounced flavor than carrots. They are terrific when roasted in the oven, or cooked with a pot roast in a slow cooker. My personal favorite parsnip recipe that may help you through these cold weather months is a curry spiced apple and parsnip soup that is both sweet and savory. Parsnips have a variety of health benefits, with 26% of the Daily Value for fiber, 25% of the Daily Value for Vitamin C, and 25% of the Daily Value for Vitamin K all in a one cup serving.

Parsnips are also a good source of antioxidants, particularly flavonoids like quercetin and kaempferol. Not only are they nutritious, but parsnips are relatively affordable. A 16-oz bag from Walmart runs for \$2.94, and at Publix they can be found between \$3-4, depending on the size of the bunch. Unfortunately, like most root vegetables, parsnips thrive in colder climates, meaning Florida is not the ideal place to grow them. The fact that they must be shipped in from the north drives up prices, along with limited demand. Regardless, they are worth purchasing at least once to add some variety to dishes involving root vegetables. I highly suggest that next time you are using carrots in a recipe you try also adding parsnips to add a variety of colors and flavors to your meal.



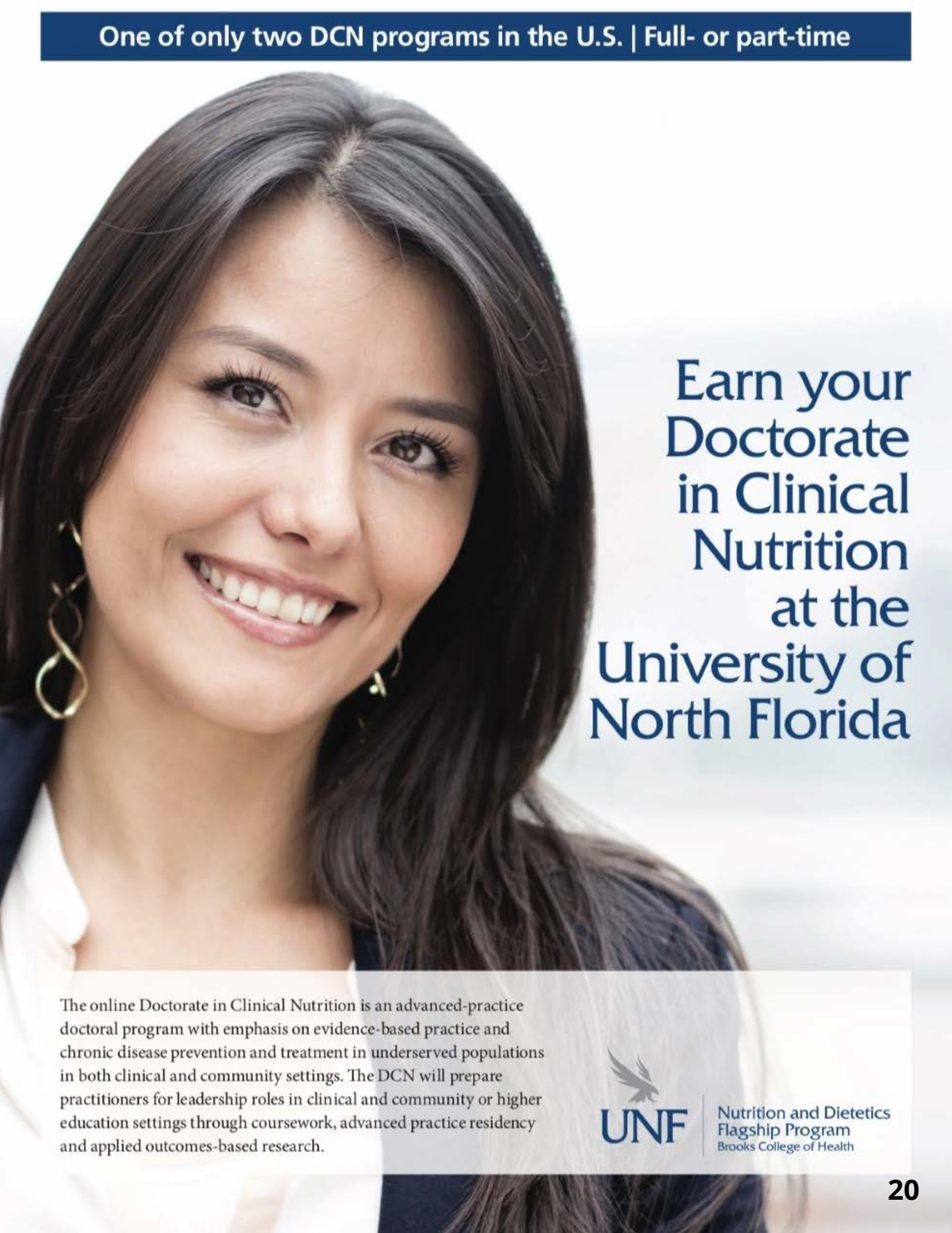




2021

HAPPY NEW  
YEAR





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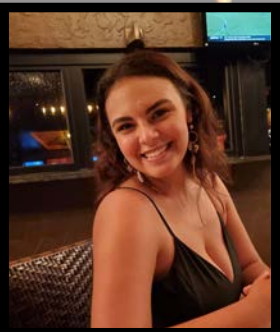
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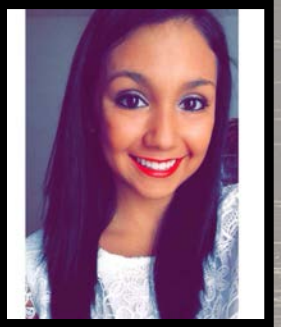
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