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**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

March 2006

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the second issue of Eat Right Montana's 2006 Campaign. This month, we will explore many issues surrounding organic foods as part of the local food system, and we will highlight numerous strategies for staying active in our local communities throughout the cold weather months.

In the United States, the organic foods market is expanding rapidly with an annual growth rate of greater than 20% since 1997. Consumer demand is the primary driver behind this rapidly expanding market. However, many consumers remain perplexed relative to many issues concerning organic foods. Our "Eat Local" handout this month presents an overview of organic food issues in a question and answer format.

While many people find staying physically active during the winter months difficult due to the cold temperatures, slick surfaces and shorter days, there are strategies we all can take to make this annual physical activity lull disappear. Our "Play Local" handout this month will highlight these strategies and provide that incentive to get out into the crisp, refreshing air.

As you may be aware, Eat Right Montana is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of healthful eating and active lifestyles. The production of the Healthy Families packets is possible due to the generosity of the donors you see listed at the left. We ask that you consider a donation to the ERM organization. Donations may be sent to:

Barbara Wheeler, Treasurer ERM  
P.O. Box 5283  
Bozeman, MT 59717

Thank you for your past and future support of Eat Right Montana. Your feedback is always important to us; please let us know what you think. For a complete archive of past Healthy Families packets, go to: [www.montanadieticassociation.org/promo.html](http://www.montanadieticassociation.org/promo.html)

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## Physical Activity

# Stay Active All Winter Long!

*Looking for some ideas for staying physically active all year round? Here you can find simple tips for staying active during those brisk, invigorating winter days.*



### Find a Winter Buddy and Be Accountable to Each Other

- Studies have shown that people who work out in pairs are more likely to stick to their physical activity routine than those who go it alone. Important considerations when identifying an activity buddy include:
  - Are there activities that you both find enjoyable?
  - Do your schedules work well together?
  - Is there a location convenient to both of you to meet regularly?
- Activity buddies can bring each other so many benefits including:
  - Accountability
  - Support
  - Healthy competition
  - Social stimulation – its both fun and relaxing!
- For some people this winter buddy is a pet – your dog still wants to go for walks when the temperature drops. Make that commitment to keep Fido happy and yourself happy and healthy as well.

### Important Tips for Staying Safe and Comfortable Outside in Winter Weather

- One word – traction. Icy and snowy surfaces can be dangerous and keep many people from venturing outside. Try wearing some traction enhancing devices on your shoes. The following websites link you to products that are designed just for this purpose:
  - Yaktrax®: <http://yaktrax.com/>
  - STABILicers™: [http://www.32north.com/prod\\_stab.htm](http://www.32north.com/prod_stab.htm)
- Wear layers of clothing so you may adapt to temperature/environment changes and to your level of exertion.



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## Physical Activity

### Day-to-Day Tricks for Getting More Activity During Winter - Inside or Outside



- Park in the parking lot spot that is furthest from your building.
- Set an alarm at your desk or on your computer that reminds you to get up every hour and walk around or do some calisthenics.
- March in place while watching television, talking on the telephone, etc.
- Put the television remote on the TV and get up and change the channel.
- Get up and walk around the house or up and down stairs during TV commercials.
- Walk at local malls.

### How Can Staying Active Year-Round Benefit You?

- Avoid annual weight gain
- Lower blood pressure
- Decrease cholesterol
- Burn calories, build muscle and lose fat
- Feel better mentally and physically and have more energy
- Reduce stress

### Playing Locally in Winter

- Your local parks have an entirely different look and feel in winter. Discover the changing seasonal landscape of your local trails and byways.
- Get to know new folks in your community by embarking on a new winter sport.
  - Is there a snowshoe outing group in your community?
  - Explore cross-country ski trails and get to know "the regulars."
  - Spend family time sledding or ice skating on local hills or ice-rinks.

For more tips for staying physically active each day, check out the following weblinks:

My Pyramid Guide to Increasing Physical Activity

[http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical\\_activity\\_tips.html](http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical_activity_tips.html)

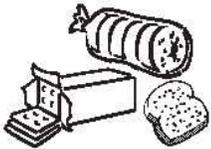
Get Active Stay Active: A site for teens

<http://www.getactivestayactive.com/>

## Healthy Eating

# Organic Food: Question and Answers

*As more and more products labeled "organic" end up on grocery store shelves, it is important for consumers to understand what the word "organic" means. The following questions and answers may help in understanding how organic foods are labeled and in deciding if buying organic is important to you.*



### What is organic food?

Organic food is food that is produced without any of the following:

- conventional pesticides
- fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge
- bioengineering
- ionizing radiation

Meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products that are produced organically come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones.

### Is organic food healthier?

According to the American Dietetic Association, there is no research-based evidence supporting the idea that organic food is safer or more nutritious than conventionally produced food. The differences between organic and conventionally produced food are found in the manner in which the food is grown, handled and processed. For more information on organic agricultural practices visit the link below to the Organic Trade Association. <http://www.ota.com/organic/definition.html>

### What is the organic seal all about?

The seal you see here is called the USDA Organic seal. If this appears on a product, that product contains at least 95% organic ingredients.



## Healthy Eating

### How can I tell if something is organic according to labeling in the grocery store?

Packaged foods containing organic ingredients are labeled according to how much of the finished product is actually organic. The photo below shows a comparison of four cereal products containing different amounts of organic ingredients. From left to right:

- 100% of the ingredients in this product must be organic to be labeled as 100% organic.
- In order to be labeled as "organic cereal," 95 to 100 percent of the ingredients in this product must be organic.
- This next package is simply labeled "cereal" with the small print underneath stating certain ingredients contained within the package that are organic. In order to put this "partial organic" claim on the front of a package, at least 70% of the ingredients contained within must be organic.
- The last package is simply labeled "Cereal." This product contains less than 70% organic ingredients. The cereal company is allowed to list any individual organic ingredients on the ingredient list on the side of the package, but they are not allowed to use the word "organic" on the front of the package.



Used with permission from US Department of Agriculture

For more information on organic foods, organic standards and labeling of organic products, visit the US Department of Agriculture, National Organic Program website at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Consumers/brochure.html>



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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

**EAT LOCAL, PLAY LOCAL, LIVE HEALTHY**  
**Celebrating Healthy Families 2006**

## **Consumer Demand for Local and/or Organic Foods on the Rise**

There is a changing wind when it comes to food consumption trends in America. Consumers are demanding more locally produced food and more organically produced food than ever before. Why are these market niches gaining popularity? The concept of sustainable agricultural production is one that resonates deeply with many consumers concerned about both human health and environmental health. "The farm organism is a concept you hear about more and more," stated Chaz Holt, owner of Holt Heritage Products of Joliet, Montana, a consulting company servicing organic and sustainable agricultural producers. "The concept of the farm organism is an acknowledgement that all living things are connected in the food production cycle. From the microbes that are so important to healthy soil to the consumer who ultimately eats the food... when one part of this whole is harmed or destroyed, the whole organism suffers. Sustainable production helps to keep the entire food system functioning in a healthy way with an eye to the future." Organic food production fits within this sustainable approach to food production.

The organic products market sector has enjoyed a steady growth of greater than 20% annually since 1997. Organic is appearing even among conventional brands, with products such as Ragu<sup>®</sup> spaghetti sauce and Orville Redenbacher<sup>®</sup> microwave popcorn now offering organic product lines. The American Dietetic Association states clearly that according to research, there is no evidence that organic produce is more nutritious or safer than conventionally grown produce and that the primary difference between organic foods and conventionally grown foods is the way in which they are grown and processed. Food consumption trends are indicating that perhaps the growing and processing practices are enough for many people to prefer organic.

Many of the consumers concerned about purchasing organic foods are the same ones looking to get their food products from local agricultural producers. When asked how important he thinks it is for consumers to seek out locally produced food, Mr. Holt answered, "Very important. The consumer benefits by really getting to know the source of the food that nourishes them and the producer benefits by selling their products locally and minimizing the expenses associated with transporting their harvested products over great distances. If people purchase food that is produced within their food shed, the farmer gets more return and ultimately is able to increase their production."

Eat Right Montana, a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of healthful eating and active lifestyles has recognized this growing consumer interest in locally produced food and thus has adopted the theme, "Eat Local, Play Local, Live Healthy" for their 2006 educational campaign.

As these changing food consumption trends emerge, it becomes quite clear that the days when organic products were tucked in a corner at the local health food store are long gone. In 2004, the number of conventional grocery stores featuring organic products equaled the number of health food stores with the same. In looking to the future, it makes one wonder if soon the shelf space for locally produced food products may expand as it has for organic products.