



March 1, 2001

Dear EAT RIGHT MONTANA Friend:

This month's **EAT RIGHT MONTANA** packet is the third in our 2001 **Real Guidelines for Real People** series. It focuses on the second guideline of the 2000 Dietary Guidelines for Americans: **Be physically active each day.**

There is no doubt about the need for more physical activity in the US. There is also no doubt that we have become a country of couch, computer and car potatoes - and that we are now raising a generation of tater tots. Despite 24-hour fitness centers and home exercise contraptions of every sort, Americans are getting more sedentary and out of shape by the day.

Based on a growing body of research, health experts are beginning to focus on "lifestyle activity" as the solution to America's fitness problems. Studies show that fitting fitness into daily life (like taking the stairs and parking farther away from the door) provides health benefits similar to a traditional gym workout. Better yet, people are more likely to stay with such a plan. The real question is how to get Americans off the couch and out the door!

For some new "twists" on fitness and health, check out:

- **The SPARK: The Revolutionary 3-Week Fitness Plan** (by Glenn Gaesser and Karla Dougherty), is based on Dr. Gaesser's groundbreaking Spark Study 2000 at the University of Virginia. For more information about the book and the authors, click on: <http://www.thesparkplan.com/>
- **SportBrain** is a techie gadget, AKA "wireless personal fitness assistant," that tracks your every move in an effort to get you moving that extra mile. Highly recommended from the experience of nutrition colleagues. Check it out at sports retailers nationwide or @ www.sportbrain.com

As always, we welcome your suggestions and comments.

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Couch Potatoes and Tater Tots: The facts about physical inactivity in the US

According to **Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General** (<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/sgr.htm>), American adults are failing even the most basic standards of fitness:

- More than 60% of US adults do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity.
- Approximately 25% of American adults are completely sedentary.
- Only about 15% of adults are vigorously active on a regular basis.
- Physical inactivity is more common among:
 - Women than men.
 - African American and Hispanic adults than whites.
 - Older than younger adults.
 - Less affluent than more affluent people.

The news is no better when it comes to children and teens. According to data in the Fall 2000 report **Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports: A Report to the President From the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education** (<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/presphysactrpt/index.htm>):

- Walking and bicycling by children aged 5-15 dropped 40% between 1977 and 1995.
- More than one-third (37%) of all trips to school are made from one mile away or less, but only 31% of these trips are made by walking.
- More than one in three high school students (35%) do not participate regularly in vigorous physical activity.
- Regular participation in vigorous physical activity drops from 73% of 9th grade students to 61% of 12th grade students.
- Only 29% attend daily physical education classes, a dramatic decline from 1991, when 42% of high school students did so.
- Nearly half (44%) are not even enrolled in a physical education class; enrollment in physical education drops from 79% in 9th grade to 37% in 12th grade.
- Nearly half (45%) of high school students do not play on any sports teams during the year.

Provided by Eat Right Montana



Real Guidelines for Real People: Be physically active each day
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Healthy Families 2001: Spring into fun and fitness (3rd in a series of 12)

It's not news that physical activity is good for what ails you. Hippocrates, the father of medicine who lived from 460 to 377 B.C., wrote: "Walking is man's best medicine."

"Modern science has confirmed this ancient wisdom," says Michael Spence, MD, State Medical Officer in the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. "Health experts know that physical activity is good for every part of the human body – from our brains to our bones. Being active can give you energy today and help prevent deadly diseases tomorrow."

The problem in Montana, and across the US, is that people aren't active enough. Our 24/7 lifestyles and the Information Age have us firmly planted on our couches, at our computers and in our cars. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 60 percent of American adults, and about half their kids, do not meet even the most basic recommendations for physical activity.

The good news is that it's easier than most people think to get the activity they need. Research shows that even short bouts of physical activity can make a big difference in overall health.

"You don't have to join a gym and start running marathons unless you want to," agrees Spence. "The main thing is to get at least 30 minutes of moderate activity a day – or about 200 minutes over the course of a week. You don't even have to do the full 30 minutes at one time. Something as simple as three 10-minute brisk walks can help you control your weight and fight heart disease at the same time."

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to make fun physical activity part of every day. March is the ideal time to spring into a regular fitness plan. Temperatures are thawing and days are growing longer – making it even easier to be active and have some outdoor fun in Big Sky country.

ATTACHED: "Everyday Activity Solutions" and "10 reasons to be more active"



Real Guidelines for Real People: Everyday Activity Solutions

The best path to fitness, by far, is regular physical activity. Active people have an easier time maintaining their weight. They also tend to be healthier and to have a better attitude toward life in general.

To become more active, you can join a health club – or just start a walking routine in your neighborhood. To get the benefits, all you need is a total of 30 to 45 minutes of moderate activity for at least 5 days a week. For example, three brisk 10-minute walks will do the trick.

The bottom line is very simple: Get off the couch, get moving, and keep moving. And, while you're up, change the "E" word from exercise to enjoyment. You'll be much more likely to make activity part of your daily routine if you are having a good time. Here are ten easy, fun ways to move more and to enhance your flexibility, your strength, and your overall fitness at any age.

Be physically active each day.

1. Take a walk – or a hike.

- ✓ Walk around the house, around the neighborhood or around the mall. Walk to the grocery store, the post office or the park. Walk alone or with a friend. Just walk – every day.

2. Use the stairs to build your legs.

- ✓ Forget the boredom of a stair machine. Pump up your leg muscles with the real thing. Skip elevators and escalators whenever you can – and add an extra flight or two of stairs during break time.

3. Stretch your body to energize your day.

- ✓ Use a towel to stretch your shoulders and upper body when you get out of the shower each morning. Take a minute or two to stretch your legs and back while sitting at your desk or watching TV.

4. Take advantage of phone time.

- ✓ Keep a small weight (2 to 5 pounds) near the phone and do biceps curls while you talk with family, friends or colleagues. Wander around the house or the office while you talk on a cordless phone.

5. Play with kids – or just act like a kid.

- ✓ Hit a few balls, shoot some hoops, throw a Frisbee, jump rope, play hopscotch, swing on a swing, or go fly a kite. Make family time fitness time – and have a ton of fun together.

6. Dance more often.

- ✓ Take a class in salsa, swing or square dancing. Make a dance date instead of a dinner date or movie date. Turn up the stereo and rock around the house while you vacuum or sweep.

7. Build mini-walks into each day.

- ✓ Walk around the block when you go out to get the mail. Walk around the office or the building at work. Walk around the sidelines during your kids' sports practice or ball game.

8. Be more active by being less efficient.

- ✓ Take items up or down the stairs individually, instead of piling them up for one big trip. Connect with people by walking to their office, instead of calling or sending E-mail.

9. Work in the yard whenever you can.

- ✓ Dig, hoe, mow, rake, and shovel snow in the winter. The more work you do by hand, the fitter you will become – and the better your yard will look.

10. Just do it – be physically active each day.

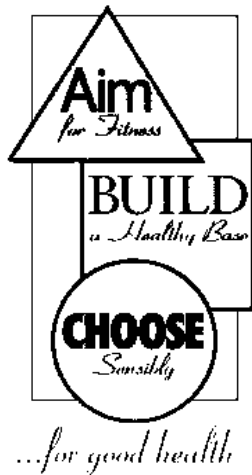
- ✓ Do it alone or do it with a friend. Do it all at once or do it 10 minutes at a time. Do it inside or do it outside. Do it briskly or do it slowly. Do the same thing or do different things. **Just do it.**

For more tips on fun and fitness, check out:

- **Just Move: American Heart Association Fitness Center**
<http://www.justmove.org/home.cfm>
- **Physical Activity: It fits with life**
<http://www.beactive.org/>
- **USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center**
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000054.html>

**Celebrating
Healthy Families
2001**





Real Guidelines for Real People: Ten reasons to be more active

Most people can think of every reason in the world not to be more active. They are too busy, too tired, too old, or too flabby. They think that exercise is too boring, too tiring, too sweaty, too hard, too complicated or too expensive.

Nothing could be further from the truth. There is every reason in the world to be more active – everything from more energy to better sleep. Check out these 10 reasons to get moving – and then just do it!

- 1. You'll feel younger and stay stronger.**
 - ✓ Active people have more muscle mass and stronger muscles at every age.
- 2. You'll have more energy every day.**
 - ✓ Being active improves your energy level, your mood, and your overall attitude.
- 3. You'll handle stress and anxiety better.**
 - ✓ Physical activity can help with stress management, anxiety and depression.
- 4. You'll pump up your immunity to infections.**
 - ✓ Active people tend to have fewer colds and fewer respiratory infections.
- 5. You'll improve your cholesterol levels.**
 - ✓ Activity can help lower total cholesterol levels and boost good cholesterol.
- 6. You'll lower your blood pressure.**
 - ✓ If you have high blood pressure, you can lower it with less medication.
- 7. You'll normalize your blood sugar levels.**
 - ✓ Activity can improve blood sugar levels and may even prevent Type 2 diabetes.
- 8. You'll build stronger bones.**
 - ✓ You can reduce your risk of osteoporosis with regular weight-bearing activities.
- 9. You'll sleep more soundly.**
 - ✓ Studies show activity improves sleep quality, duration and ease of falling asleep.
- 10. You may even live longer and you'll certainly live better.**
 - ✓ Activity helps prevent heart disease, cancer, gallstones, and prostate problems.



**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2001**

Eating Right, Playing Hard

Active kids need fuel – for sports, for school, for health, and for normal growth and development. Use these tasty tips to help them get the foods and fluids they need.

POWER FOODS

Go for the grains.

Kids need the high-energy carbs in grain foods like bread and cereal. Sneak in whole grain foods whenever you can.

Eat a champion's breakfast.

Serve cereals with whole grain as the first ingredient (like Cheerios, Frosted Mini-Wheats, and Wheaties).

Offer breakfast-to-go.

Bagels, muffins, bananas, apples, string cheese, yogurt and juice boxes are all great for eating on the run.

Carry snacks everywhere.

Be prepared for a snack attack with bags of trail mix, nuts, crackers-n-cheese, sandwiches, fruits and veggies.

Pack an insulated bag.

Traveling athletes need food for the road. Fill an insulated bag with high-energy snacks and frozen juice boxes.

Offer bread at every meal.

Slices of bread, rolls or bread sticks are easy, tasty ways to get kids eating more high-energy carbohydrates.

REFRESHING FLUIDS

Drink, drink, drink.

The secret to staying well hydrated is to drink fluids **BEFORE**, **DURING**, and **AFTER** any physical activity.

Aim for 2 to 3 quarts a day.

Start with the basic six 8-ounce cups. Then add another 8 ounces for every one-half hour of strenuous activity.

Choose beverages wisely.

Water is always a great choice. To get kids to increase fluid intake, try flavored milks, 100% juices, and sports drinks.

Carry water everywhere.

Give kids a personalized water bottle to carry everywhere – in the car, on the bus, at school, and on the field.

Stop at every water fountain.

Get into the water habit by taking a drink whenever you have the chance. Show kids where they can find water.

And then, drink some more.

Put a pitcher on the table after every activity. Remember the 3Rs of recovery: Rehydrate, Refuel and Rest.



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2001**

Healthy Families 2001:

Real Guidelines for Real People

January 2001

- **The New Dietary Guidelines: What's in them for you?**

February 2001

- **Aim for a Healthy Weight: Getting real about weight management**

March 2001

- **Be Physically Active Each Day: Spring into fun and fitness**

April 2001

- **Let the Pyramid Guide Your Food Choices: Build a tasty eating style**

May 2001

- **Choose a Variety of Grains: Great grains for life**

June 2001

- **Choose a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables: 5 A Day and beyond**

July 2001

- **Keep Food Safe to Eat: Putting safety first**

August 2001

- **Making Sensible Fat Choices: Straight facts on fat**

September 2001

- **Making Sensible Sugar Choices: Straight scoop on sugar**

October 2001

- **Making Sensible Sodium Choices: Straight shake on salt**

November 2001

- **Making Sensible Beverage Choices: A toast to your health**

December 2001

- **Year-Round Health: Real guidelines for real health**



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