



March 1, 2002

Dear EAT RIGHT MONTANA Friend:

This issue of our **Healthy Families** campaign focuses on men, vegetables, and "sparks" of physical activity. These three topics are woven together with the benefits of small behavior changes for long-term weight management and overall health. These ERM materials complement and reinforce the **2002 National Nutrition Month** theme of ***Start Today for a Healthy Tomorrow.***

The concept that small changes can make a big difference is an important, and reassuring, one for Americans. When we think about losing weight or improving our health, we often think that drastic action will be necessary. We imagine going on a strict diet - or needing to spend hours sweating in a gym. We mistakenly believe that it will take a dramatic weight loss - like 30, 40, or 50 pounds - to make a significant improvement in our health.

This grim view of diet, exercise and weight loss can be a serious obstacle to health in a couple ways. One is that people give up before they even start. If the road to a healthy body is too long and painful, why bother to go down it at all? Might as well just sit on the couch - and eat and drink what you like!

The other problem is that this view makes people desperate for quick fixes. That's when the supplement industry steps in - with just what desperate people want: Miracle products promising that you can "lose unwanted pounds while you sleep," "eat all the cheesecake you want," and "dump ugly fat without strenuous exercise" (actual quotes from current radio ads). Sadly, many of the popular weight loss supplements deliver a dangerous dose of ephedra (see page 2) along their empty promises. **National Nutrition Month** is a great time to steer your clients away from hazardous ingredients like ephedra - and toward delicious nutrition solutions for a healthy tomorrow.

As always, we appreciate your support and welcome your suggestions.

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Facts about Ephedra

Weight loss supplements linked to serious health hazards

What is Ephedra?

- Ephedra, also known as Ma Huang, comes from a shrub native to China. Green stems from the plant have been used for centuries in traditional Chinese medicine.
- Ephedra's active ingredients are a group of amphetamine-like compounds known as ephedrine-alkaloids, which are effective as decongestants and bronchodilators.
- Dietary supplements containing ephedra/ephedrine are widely sold in the US as weight loss products, herbal stimulants, and energy boosters.
- Over 200 products on the market contain ephedra in some form. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA at www.fda.gov) collects reports of adverse ephedra reactions and has held several recent hearings about the dangers of ephedra/ephedrine.

What are the dangers of using Ephedra?

- Ephedra/ephedrine is a powerful stimulant with potentially serious effects on the nervous system, brain, and heart. Hundreds of consumer illnesses, injuries and deaths have been associated with the use of products containing ephedrine-alkaloids.
- These compounds have been linked to strokes, seizures, psychoses, heart attacks, permanent disability, and sudden death, as well as heart rate irregularities, severe hypertension, anxiety, dizziness, jitteriness, insomnia, vomiting, hives, and hepatitis.
- Combining ephedrine compounds with caffeine and some prescription medications (like heart stimulants) may increase the risk of side effects and adverse reactions.

What do the experts say about Ephedra?

- In January 2002, Health Canada issued a recall for some products containing ephedra after an assessment concluded that they "pose a serious risk to health." A customs lookout has also been issued to prevent importation of ephedra products into Canada.
- FDA continues to investigate ephedra supplements. It currently recommends no more than 24 milligrams total per day (8 mgs. per dose) for no longer than 7 days at a time. Ephedra is not recommended for children, pregnant women or breastfeeding mothers.

For more information about ephedra and Ma Huang:

- **Health Canada (Recall Advisory and links to other information)**
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/protection/warnings/2002/2002_01e.htm
- **Longwood Herbal Task Force (Professional monograph and patient summary)**
<http://www.mcp.edu/herbal/ephedra/ephedra.htm>
- **New England Journal of Medicine:** Adverse Cardiovascular and Central Nervous System Events Associated with Dietary Supplements Containing Ephedra Alkaloids, Christine A. Haller, Neal L. Benowitz, N Engl J Med; 343:1833-1838, Dec 21, 2000
<http://www.nejm.org/> (full text available after free registration)

Provided by Eat Right Montana



**Moving Montana Toward a Fit Future: Good news for guys
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Healthy Families 2002: Small changes make a big difference (3rd in a series of 12)

It's a familiar story. A 40 to 50-something guy spends more time sitting at a desk – and less time playing ball. His fitness level goes down, while his weight, cholesterol and blood pressure go up. His family starts to worry – and his doctor starts talking about medication to control blood sugar levels.

“There is exciting new research with great health news for middle-aged men and the people who love them,” says John Schroeck, MEd, CHES, project manager for the Montana Obesity Prevention Program. “Several recent studies have confirmed that small changes in eating habits and activity levels can mean big health benefits. We are also learning that physical activity may even be able to turn back the clock – at least when it comes to heart health.”

The impressive benefits of lifestyle changes were recently confirmed by a large clinical trial called the Diabetes Prevention Program (DDP). The results, published in the February 7, 2002, *New England Journal of Medicine*, showed that lifestyle modifications (low-fat eating and walking 30 minutes a day) could reduce the risk of developing diabetes – by a whopping 58 percent.

According to Schroeck, these results are consistent with other research. “We know that lifestyle changes, and losing as little as ten pounds, can lower blood pressure and improve blood cholesterol,” he says. “Physical activity is also an effective anti-aging strategy. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center recently reported that 6 months of exercise training (walking, jogging and cycling) could return 50-year-old men to the same level of cardiovascular fitness that they enjoyed at age 20.”

Eat Right Montana (ERM), a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montana men to start making life changes today – for a healthy tomorrow. The key is to choose small changes in eating and activity that you are willing to do for the rest of your life.

“Healthy changes can be delicious and fun,” says Schroeck. “It’s as easy as choosing a lean steak and ordering extra broccoli – or parking the golf cart and walking around the course with your buddies.”

ATTACHED: “Eating veggies the healthy weigh” and “Starting an activity SPARK”

Eating Vegetables the Healthy "Weigh"

Are you one of the millions of Americans suffering from a serious vegetable deficit? Everyone knows that veggies are healthy, but do you know how good-for-you they really are? Here are six good reasons to follow your mom's advice and eat your vegetables!

1. Eat vegetables to maintain a healthy weight.

As a group, vegetables are **low in calories** and **virtually fat-free**. (Avocados, technically a fruit, are the only real exception.) Increasing your veggie intake is the easy, tasty way to cut back on calories, maximize nutrients, and protect your health – all at the same time.

2. Eat vegetables to protect your heart.

Vegetables are packed with the nutrients that can reduce your risk of heart disease – like **follic acid** (spinach, asparagus, and Romaine lettuce), **antioxidants** (tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and peppers), and **fiber** (corn, peas, and legumes – dried beans and peas).

3. Eat vegetables to fight cancer.

High veggie intakes have been shown to reduce the risk of almost all types of cancer. Two potent cancer fighters are **cruciferous vegetables** (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts) and those high in **lycopene** (tomatoes, red peppers, and red fruits).

4. Eat vegetables to preserve your vision.

Vegetables do more than help you see in the dark. High intakes of produce rich in **lutein** and **zeaxanthin** (dark green veggies like broccoli, spinach, kale and collard greens) help prevent macular degeneration, the most common cause of blindness in older people.

5. Eat vegetables to save your skin.

Vitamin C (found in tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, broccoli and cabbage) has long been known as a super nutrient for maintaining collagen and connective tissue under the skin. Some preliminary studies also suggest that veggie lovers may be less prone to wrinkles.

6. Eat vegetables to build strong bones.

It takes a whole cast of nutrients to build strong bones – and veggies are great sources of several essential ones. Bone up with **vitamin K** (spinach and broccoli), **potassium** (potatoes and mushrooms), and **magnesium** (spinach, limas, and black-eyed peas).



**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2002**

Putting SPARKS into Your Fitness Plan

Think that you need an hour to get the benefits of exercise? Think that you need to constantly measure your pulse? Think that you need expensive machines? Think again!! Based on research by exercise physiologist Dr. Glenn Gaesser, this new program shows how small bursts of activity can lead to big improvements in weight, strength and fitness.

1. The goal = 15 SPARKS per week

Dr. Gaesser believes that small bouts of activity (10 minute **SPARKS**) provide the same benefits as longer exercise bouts – and he has research to back it up. The key is to fit at least 15 ten-minute **SPARKS** into every week – up to three 10-minute **SPARKS** per day.

2. The 10-minute aerobic SPARK

There are three basic **SPARKS**. The first is the aerobic **SPARK** – a 10-minute period of any activity that gets your heart pumping and your blood flowing. Walk to the store, bike around the block, dance through the living room, climb the stairs, or stride down the hall.

3. The 10-minute strength-training SPARK

The second type is the strength training **SPARK**. Forget complicated exercise-apparatus or pricey health club memberships; all you need is some inexpensive hand-held weights and a few basic curls, crunches, and extensions (see **The SPARK** book for simple ideas).

4. The 10-minute flexibility SPARKS

Activity experts know that stretches are a vital part of the fitness equation. A flexibility **SPARK** can also help reduce stress and increase energy. Go for steady stretch and a gentle pull – like leg lifts and body twists. Yoga moves are full of **SPARK** possibilities.

5. The goal = gradually increasing the SPARK

The **SPARK** program features a continuous, but gradual, increase in the effort that you put into all three types of activity. The goal is to challenge your body and maximize the fitness benefits – without having to increase the amount of time you spend.

6. The goal = maintaining the SPARK forever

The key to success with **SPARKS** (and any other fitness plan) is to find activities you enjoy – and will do forever. For more information, read *The Spark: The Revolutionary New Plan to Get Fit and Lose Weight, 10 Minutes at a Time* (Fireside, \$12.00).



**Celebrating
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Fighting Heart Disease and Cancer with Veggies:

Why real men eat tomatoes and broccoli with their steak

When we think of men and food, meat and potatoes often come to mind. As one comic strip put it, “salad is what they serve while you are waitin’ for the real food to fry.” In terms of overall health, there’s nothing wrong with a lean steak and a baked potato or some oven fries. Most healthy men can also enjoy a burger and fries – just not every day.

For optimal health, eat a wide variety of produce on a daily basis. Nutrition experts know that “**5 A Day**” is a minimum. To get the maximum benefits, find delicious ways to eat 8 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Here are three of the top veggies that can help men, and their families, fight disease with their knife and fork.

1. Tomato products:

Studies show that eating plenty of tomatoes can lower your risk of heart disease and cancers (like prostate and stomach). The benefits may come from a powerful antioxidant called lycopene (also found in watermelon, strawberries, and other red produce). Experts note that lycopene is better absorbed from cooked or heat-processed tomatoes than raw ones. You can get lycopene from fresh and canned tomatoes, as well as tomato soup, sauce, paste, salsa, and, yes, even ketchup! For recipes and more info about all types of produce, visit <http://aboutproduce.com>

2. Broccoli family:

It’s hard to say enough good things about broccoli and its cousins in the cruciferous family of vegetables, which includes cabbage, cauliflower, broccoflower, kale, kohlrabi, and Brussels sprouts. These veggies are packed with nutrients. In every bite, you get fiber, vitamin C, and beta-carotene, along with a healthy serving of several disease-fighting phytonutrients. Eating just 1½ cups of cruciferous vegetables per week may lower your prostate cancer risk by 40 percent. For a bunch of delicious recipes and more nutrition information, visit www.broccoli.com

3. Soy foods:

Based on extensive research, FDA approved a soy health claim for food packages in 1999. It reads: *Foods containing soy protein included in a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by lowering blood cholesterol levels. And, that’s not all! Soy foods may also reduce your risk of cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. The good news is that there are many exciting new ways to enjoy soy protein – even if tofu is not one of your top ten foods. For new products and tasty recipes, go to www.soyfoods.com*



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Healthy Families 2002: Moving Montana Toward a Fit Future: Start today for a healthy weight

January 2002

- **The ABCs of a Healthy Weight**

February 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for Women**

March 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for Men**

April 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for Children**

May 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for Pregnant Women**

June 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight After Having a Baby**

July 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for Babies and Toddlers**

August 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for Teens**

September 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for Seniors**

October 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight during Menopause**

November 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight for People with Diabetes**

December 2002

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight Forever**



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles