



**April 1, 2002**

**Dear EAT RIGHT MONTANA Friend:**

This month our **Healthy Families 2002** campaign covers **children, fruit, and play** as a physical activity. The three topics are woven together with a focus on **family health habits** – as the key to preventing and treating childhood weight problems. These materials are a wonderful way to celebrate April as **Month of the Young Child** and **Turn Off Your TV Week** (April 22 thru 28).

When it comes to children and weight, the news isn't good. Survey after survey shows that American children and teens are getting heavier and heavier. Many young people are also suffering serious health consequences, like Type 2 diabetes, as a result. A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine (03/14/02) reported that 25 percent of obese children and 21 percent of obese teens have impaired glucose tolerance (<http://www.nejm.org>).

The childhood weight issue is complex – with several interrelated problems affecting American youth. These include the well-documented increases in overweight and obesity – along with intense social pressure for excessive slenderness and unsafe weight loss practices. A consensus paper released by the Michigan Department of Education in fall 2001 provides a review of the issues, makes recommendations for schools, and provides an excellent list of resources. "***The Role of Michigan Schools in Promoting Healthy Weight***" is online at

<http://www.michiganfitness.org/pressreleases/Healthy%20Weight.pdf>.

Obviously, the solutions to these complicated problems are not simple – and they will be neither quick nor easy. Although the odds can feel overwhelming at times, we have a critical role to play. Nutrition and fitness communicators can offer important information and support to families, schools, and communities. And, we better get started; they need us now more than ever.

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

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# Kids, Weight, Nutrition and Activity

- ✓ In 1999, 13 percent of American children aged 6 to 11 years and 14 percent of US adolescents aged 12 to 19 years were overweight. The prevalence of overweight teens has nearly tripled in the past two decades.
- ✓ Type 2 diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and teens, especially those who are overweight.

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/>

- ✓ There has been a dramatic decrease in youth physical activity. Nearly half of adolescents aged 12 to 21 years are not vigorously active on a regular basis.
- ✓ About 14 percent of young people report no recent physical activity. Inactivity is more common among females (14 percent) than males (7 percent) and among black females (21 percent) than white females (12 percent). Less than half (49 percent) of US high school students are enrolled in a PE class and only 27 percent take PE daily.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/adoles.htm>

- ✓ American children eat only half the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Experts estimate that only 1 in 5 kids gets “5 A Day.”
- ✓ The most common vegetables eaten by kids are French fries, ketchup, and pizza sauce. Of the vegetables eaten by 6 to 11 year olds, approximately 55 to 60 percent come from either potatoes or tomatoes. Kids have especially low intakes of nutrient-rich dark green leafy and deep yellow veggies.

<http://www.barc.usda.gov/bhnrc/foodsurvey/home.htm>

- ✓ Few kids' snacks include fruits and veggies. Over 50 percent of snacks eaten by American children are cookies, desserts, potato chips, salty snacks, candy, and gum. Only 16 percent of snacks are fruits – and only 1 percent are veggies.

[http://www.dole5aday.com/Media/M\\_Index.html](http://www.dole5aday.com/Media/M_Index.html)

- ✓ American per capita soft-drink consumption has increased almost 500 percent over the past fifty years. On average, adolescents get 11 percent of their calories (about 15 teaspoons of sugar) from soft drinks per day.

<http://www.nchealthyschools.org/nchealthyschools/htdocs/SoftDrinkFinal.pdf>

- ✓ Five to ten million adolescent girls and women, and 1 million boys and men struggle with eating disorders and related psychiatric conditions.
- ✓ Almost half of elementary school students between the 1st and 3rd grades want to be thinner, and 4 out of 5 ten-year-olds are afraid of being fat.

<http://www.edap.org/>

**Provided by Eat Right Montana**



**Moving Montana Toward a Fit Future: Parents lead the way  
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**Healthy Families 2002: Helping kids toward a healthy weight (4<sup>th</sup> in a series of 12)**

Some call it a crisis. Some call it an epidemic. Whatever you call it, there are some very serious concerns developing about the weight, fitness, and health of American children and teenagers.

“There has been a dramatic increase in the number of young people who are obese, overweight or at risk of becoming overweight,” says Katie Bark, RD, registered dietitian with the Montana Team Nutrition Program. “Weight problems then put these kids at risk for a whole list of serious problems, like Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, unsafe weight loss practices, and eating disorders.”

Many factors contribute to the weight gain of Generation XXL: super-sized portions (especially in fast food restaurants), dramatic increases in soft drink intake (up 500 percent in the past fifty years), and low-intakes of lower-calorie choices (like fruits and veggies). Kids eating more and moving less – thanks to electronic entertainment like three N’s: Nintendo, Nickelodeon, and Netscape. Kids spend many hours sitting in front of TVs, while computers video games have made play a sedentary activity.

According to Bark, diets are not the solution for overweight children. “Trying to control your child’s intake may actually backfire and make them fatter,” she says. “The best way to help kids achieve a healthy weight is for parents and other adults to be role models. If you are worried about your child’s weight, look for easy, simple ways to improve your whole family’s eating habits and activity patterns.”

Eat Right Montana (ERM), a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montana families to make positive changes today – for a healthy weight in the future. The key is to make small changes – like turning off the TV and creating some family time for active play.

“Healthful food choices can be delicious and fun,” says Bark. “Start by replacing some soft drinks with water, low-fat milk, and 100 percent juices. Keep fewer chips and cookies in the house – and make sure that fruits and veggies are readily available when hungry kids need a quick snack.”

**ATTACHED: “Eating fruit the healthy weigh” and “PLAYING your way to fitness”**

# Eating Fruit the Healthy "Weigh"

There's every reason in the world to eat fruit – health, taste, and beautiful colors. In fact, color is a great way to choose produce. By eating a rainbow of fruits (and veggies), you'll get a healthy dose of all the phytonutrients you need to fight disease and stay strong!

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## 1. Eat RED fruit.

Red fruits, like **strawberries, raspberries, cherries, watermelon** and **ruby grapefruit**, contain lycopene – a potent cancer-fighting phytonutrient. And, it's easy to work toward your **5 A Day** servings: 1/2 cup of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit equals a serving.

## 2. Eat WHITE fruit.

Even fruits that are white inside – like **bananas, apples, and pears** – offer nutrients that your body craves: potassium, phytonutrients, and more fiber. And, there's more good nutrition news: Dried fruit counts toward your **5 A Day** (1/4 cup equals a serving).

## 3. Eat BLUE fruit.

**Blueberries** are one of the richest sources of disease-fighting antioxidants in the produce department. Fresh, frozen, canned and even dried – sprinkle them on cereal, add them to pancakes, toss them in salads, or just enjoy them as a yummy **5 A Day** snack.

## 4. Eat GREEN fruit.

Green comes in a variety of delicious fruit flavors, like **green grapes, honeydew melon, and kiwis**. These versatile fruits are high in vitamin C – and they also provide potassium and more fiber. One regular kiwi equals a **5 A Day** serving, as do most medium fruits.

## 5. Eat YELLOW fruit.

Golden **pineapple** is probably America's favorite yellow fruit. Fresh, or canned in its own juice; pineapple is a nutrition favorite too. Just one-half cup equals a **5 A Day** serving – and packs a healthy punch of vitamin C (and some fiber too).

## 6. Eat ORANGE fruit.

**Oranges** are an obvious choice – but there are also **apricots, peaches, and cantaloupes**. Whole fruits have significantly more benefits than juice (like fiber) – but six-ounces of 100 percent fruit juice can also count towards one of your **5 A Day** servings.

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# PLAYING Your Weigh to Fitness

Kids need regular physical activity (30 to 60 minutes a day) to maintain a healthy weight, while growing normally. School classes and athletics count, and so do sports like Little League. Active play with friends and family is another **FUN** way to get moving.

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## 1. **PLAY inside.**

There are plenty of ways to enjoy **FUN** indoor family play, without destroying the house. Turn off the TV and the computer – and play an old-fashioned game of hide-and-seek. Clear a space for wiggling, dancing, and playing with soft-foam balls and squishy toys.

## 2. **PLAY outside.**

The options for outdoor **FUN** are unlimited: bikes, trikes, scooters, balls, kites, Frisbees, jump ropes, squirt guns, and hula-hoops. There's also a long list of childhood games that the whole family can play together – like more hide-and-seek, tag, and hopscotch.

## 3. **PLAY in the yard.**

Whatever the size of your yard, you can turn it into a neighborhood **FUN** zone – with a few basic toys: a basketball hoop, a rope swing, or a sandbox depending on the age of your children. Keep it simple – and let kids use their innate creativity to stay active.

## 4. **PLAY at the park.**

Many communities have **FUN** park facilities. Often they are close enough so that you can leave the car at home – and walk or ride a bike. Make it a regular family outing – when the weather is nice, you can even take a picnic and play before and after dinner.

## 5. **PLAY at the gym.**

Indoor gyms offer safety, warmth, and **FUN** programs for kids and parents. Check your area for schools, colleges, community centers, fitness facilities, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA/YWCAs, and other agencies that are open evenings, weekends, and vacations.

## 6. **PLAY on the field.**

Almost every community in the USA offers sport programs for children – baseball, football, basketball, soccer, tennis, and swimming. There are programs for all ages and all levels of skill – and most emphasize **FUN** and the opportunity for parents to get involved.

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**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

<http://www.montanadieteticassociation.org/promo.html>

# 5 Steps to a Healthy Weight: Family Fun, Food and Fitness

Get off the diet roller coaster –  
and take these five simple steps to whole family health in 2002.

## BE ACTIVE

Change the “E” word from exercise to enjoyment. There’s no need for expensive health club memberships or fancy exercise equipment. Just get physical for a total of 30 to 60 minutes a day – three brisk 10-minute walks will do the trick. Just do it – and see how great you feel. Fun is also the key to family fitness, so:

- **Make family time active – head to the park with a ball, or a Frisbee, or a kite.**
- **Walk around the ball field or school while the kids practice (or play a game).**
- **Plan active vacations – skiing, hiking, biking, swimming, or boating.**

## BE REALISTIC

**Make small changes in what you eat.**  
**BREAKFAST** is a tasty time to get a power surge for the day. Look for high-fiber and lower-fat choices:

- \* **Oatmeal, raisins, and fat-free milk.**
- \* **Leftover cheese pizza and OJ.**
- \* **Toaster waffles with fruit topping.**
- \* **Bagel with peanut butter and milk.**

## BE FLEXIBLE

**Balance what you eat thru the day.**  
**LUNCHES** can be lighter when you are going out for a big dinner. Look for easy ways to lower fat intake.

- \* **Share a small fries with a friend.**
- \* **Go for light mayo on sandwiches.**
- \* **Add a fruit to your usual fast food.**
- \* **Choose 1% (low-fat) or less milk.**

## BE ADVENTUROUS

**Expand your tastes with 5 A Day.**  
**SNACKS** are the smart way to get a jump-start on the 5 servings of fruits and veggies you need every day.

- \* **Baby carrots and low-fat dip.**
- \* **Banana and a carton of 1% milk.**
- \* **Veggie juice and fat-free pretzels.**
- \* **Canned pineapple and crackers.**

## BE SENSIBLE

**Enjoy all foods ~ just don’t overdo it.**  
**DINNERTIME** is the right time to enjoy moderation and to listen carefully to your signals from your stomach.

- \* **Try eating off smaller size plates.**
- \* **Start with moderate portion sizes.**
- \* **Turn off the TV and focus on food.**
- \* **Eat slowly and chew carefully.**



Celebrating

# Healthy Families 2002

## Healthy Weight for Kids:

### Resources, Programs and Initiatives

#### **ADA (American Dietetic Association)**

<http://www.adaf.org/adafinitiatives/healthyweight.htm>

The American Dietetic Association Foundation has made childhood obesity a primary focus with a *Healthy Weight for Healthy Kids* campaign, cosponsored by the Peanut Institute. Check web site for materials as they are developed.

#### **ASFSA (American School Food Service Association)**

<http://www.asfsa.org>

The 55,000 members of ASFSA work in school nutrition all across the USA, and many are active in creating school-based nutrition programs for healthy kids. The website features research, programs and ways to get involved with local schools.

#### **CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)**

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/>

The CDC site is an essential resource for nutrition and physical activity issues. Search for: surveillance data (including maps of obesity prevalence); pediatric growth charts; and several national campaigns, like Kids Walk-to-School and Turn Off Your TV.

#### **USDA (Department of Agriculture)**

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Default.htm>

The Team Nutrition program is a goldmine of materials, kits, and local efforts to enhance school nutrition environments. You can download free materials; read about Team Nutrition success stories; and find out what is going on in your state.

#### **Center for Weight and Health (University of California, Berkeley)**

<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/cwh/>

This university-based center (established by Dr. Joanne Ikeda) sponsors conferences, seminars, coalitions, and other activities in northern California. The site features links to literature, research, surveys, funding opportunities, and much more.

#### **Healthy Weight Network**

<http://www.healthyweight.net/>

Sponsored by Francie Berg, MS (author of *Children and Teens Afraid to Eat*), this site offers handouts, resources, and extensive links to other organizations – along with information about *Healthy Weight Week* and *Slim Chance Awards*.

#### **HUGS International - Nondietering resources and information**

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

Canadian dietitian, author, and speaker Linda Omichinski, RD, is a nondiet pioneer. Her website features programs and resources for all ages, including a teen program (eight stages to building a healthy, diet-free lifestyle).

Provided by Eat Right Montana

# **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**

