



September 1, 2002

Dear EAT RIGHT MONTANA Friend:

Moving along the age continuum from tweens, our September packet focuses on helping **teens move toward a healthy weight**. We also cover **fast foods**, a staple of teen eating, and **winter fitness activities** for people of all ages.

There is no way around it: **It's tough to be a teenager**. Raging hormones, changing bodies, difficult choices, and intense pressures from peers, parents and the media. In our 24/7 world, teens face many challenges when it comes to maintaining a healthy weight: hectic schedules with little time for meals or physical activity; fatty foods and sugary drinks available everywhere; fewer PE classes in high schools; unrealistic body images; and an unending stream of diet fads and miracle weight loss products.

The first step to effective communication is always to **know your audience**. When it comes to teens, CDC's Adolescent and School Health division is a great place to start. At [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/index.htm), you'll find state-by-state risk behavior data and school health report cards, as well as guidelines, resources, and tools. For an industry perspective, search on teens at [www.preparedfoods.com/](http://www.preparedfoods.com/). Here you'll find a treasure trove of details about adolescent eating patterns and how companies hope to feed them.

Although teens desperately need accurate nutrition and fitness information, they can be a challenging audience to reach. For some creative examples of how health educators are tackling this tough job, check out these sites:

- **Health Partners** @ [www.healthpartners.com/Menu/0,1791,5506,00.html](http://www.healthpartners.com/Menu/0,1791,5506,00.html)
- **New Moon** @ [www.newmoon.org/](http://www.newmoon.org/)
- **Project Lean** @ [www.caprojectlean.org/](http://www.caprojectlean.org/)

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

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# Raising Teens with Healthy Weights

What parents can do to support teen nutrition and fitness

## 1. Stop, look and listen – before you lecture.

- ✓ When you're concerned about your child, it's easy to start lecturing. Before you know it, you're telling your kid exactly what's wrong – and exactly how to fix it.
- ✓ If you're worried about your child's weight being too low or too high, the first step is to assess the situation. Observe their usual eating habits and activity patterns.
- ✓ The next step is to discuss the issue with your child. Find out how they view their weight, eating, and activity – and what changes they want to make.

## 2. Walk the healthy walk.

- ✓ Talking to kids is an important part of parenting. It is just as important to talk about food and fitness as it is to discuss drugs, alcohol, and other lifestyle choices.
- ✓ Setting a healthy example is another critical parental role. Even though teen rebellion is a normal part of growing up, adolescents still see their parents as role models.
- ✓ Teens always learn more from watching what you do than from listening to what you say. The key is to model healthful eating and an active lifestyle – every day.

## 3. Make nutrition easy.

- ✓ It's easy for today's teens to find fatty foods and sugary drinks. There are fast food restaurants, convenience stores, and vending machines around every corner.
- ✓ As a parent, you can make it easy for kids to eat nutrient-dense foods and drink power beverages. All you have to do is fill your home with delicious, nutritious choices.
- ✓ When you fill your cupboards and fridge with fruits, veggies, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, lean meats, and other tasty treats, everyone benefits.

## 4. Take an active interest.

- ✓ Kids need to know that you care. It is important to them that you take a serious interest in what they eat and how active they are.
- ✓ Family meals are one of the easiest ways to show that you care. Research confirms that children who eat with their families get more of the nutrients that they need.
- ✓ Teens also need encouragement for fitness. Whether they choose organized sports or an individual activity, they need to know that you are their biggest fan.

## 5. Provide the right resources.

- ✓ Sometimes teens need more information than you have – or specific guidance that is beyond your expertise.
- ✓ If your child needs additional help managing their weight or overcoming an eating problem, get help as soon as possible.
- ✓ If you are not sure where to find the right resources, check with a school counselor, a family health care provider, or a hospital health information center.

**Provided by Eat Right Montana**



**Moving Montana Toward a Fit Future: Healthy weights for teens  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE      CONTACT: Crystelle Fogle, MBA, RD  
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**Healthy Families 2002: Energizing teenage lifestyles (9<sup>th</sup> in a series of 12)**

The teen years are tough in many ways. Adolescents are faced with dramatic physical changes and intense social demands at the same time. They must make multiple lifestyle choices, while being bombarded with parental advice, peer pressure, and constant commercial advertising.

“Teenagers have extreme nutrition needs,” says Christine Emerson, MS, RD, registered dietitian with the Montana Office of Public Instruction. “They need lots of energy for rapid growth and plenty of protein for muscle development. They also have very high mineral needs: calcium for building bones, zinc for normal maturation, and iron for making extra blood cells, especially for teen girls.”

Today’s teens, however, face many obstacles in getting the nutrients they need for normal growth and healthy weights. Teens can find fast foods on every corner, empty-calorie soft drinks in every vending machine, and salty snacks wherever they eat. In today’s food environment, it’s really no wonder that the rates of adolescent overweight and eating disorders are rising so rapidly.

According to Emerson, helping teens make healthy choices is a challenge, but it’s not mission impossible. “Families, schools, and communities all play important roles,” she says. “In California, the Los Angeles school district recently took a courageous stand to limit soft drinks in high schools. They realized that healthy school nutrition environments can help kids grow strong bodies and able minds.”

Eat Right Montana (ERM), a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to help teens to energize their lives. Delicious nutrition and fun fitness can help adolescents achieve their dreams, enjoy lifetime health, and reduce everyday stress – all the same time.

“Getting teens the nutrients they need is as easy as substituting low-fat chocolate milk for pop,” says Emerson. “Providing smart snacks, like bananas, bagels, and baby carrots, can help teens maintain a healthy weight, win at sports, and do well in class. Eating right is a cool thing to do.”

**ATTACHED: *“Eating fast foods” and “Winning ways for winter fitness”***

# Eating FAST FOODS the Healthy Weigh

Fast food has become the American way of eating. While there is no doubt that fast food is cheap and satisfying, it is also loaded with fat and sugar! Whether you're driving-thru or sitting-down, our six smart tips can help you eat conveniently – and healthfully too!!

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## 1. Say NO thanks to combo meals.

Buying a combo or “value” meal may seem like a real deal, but it's often a nutrition disaster. The fast food chain makes more money – and you lose control of your choices. It's easy to get what you really want – just say “no” whenever they offer you a combo.

## 2. Swap super-size for smart-size.

Order a regular burger, fries and drink at Burger King® and you get 700 calories, 24 fat grams, and about 10 teaspoons of sugar. That's a serious savings over a Whopper® with King-sized fries and drink at 1,730 calories, 46 fat grams, and 27 teaspoons of sugar.

## 3. Share a biggie size with friends or family.

There is a smart way to make gigantic portions work for you – share them! By splitting one large portion, you can save money, while cutting calories and fat. At Wendy's, Great Biggie® fries have 250 less calories (530 calories) than two medium fries (780 calories).

## 4. Save money and calories with kiddie meals.

With kiddie meals, you get reasonable portions of your favorite fast foods – and a fun toy too!! Still feel hungry after a Happy Meal® at McDonald's? Order a yogurt parfait – or, better yet, bring a piece of fresh fruit for the ride back to work or school.

## 5. Substitute power drinks for soft drinks.

A 44-ounce soft drink has about 450 calories and ¾ cup of sugar (with no nutritional value). Skip the liquid candy – and enjoy the power of milk (with protein, calcium and vitamins); orange juice (with vitamin C and folic acid); or refreshing, calorie-free water.

## 6. Switch to the healthful options.

Several national chains offer tasty, healthier options, like Quizno's® and Subway® low-fat sandwiches on whole grain breads. Many have grilled chicken salads and sandwiches. Some local or regional restaurants specialize in healthful choices, like burritos or wraps.

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**Celebrating  
Healthy  
Families 2002**

# Winning Ways for Winter Fitness

Fall is the perfect time to plan for winter fun. While the temperatures are still warm, you can find out what's available in your area and get the equipment you need. By planning ahead, you won't be housebound when the thermometer drops and the snowflakes fall.

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## 1. Winter walking

Walking works wonders – any season of the year. In winter, outdoor and indoor walks are both options. For outside, all you need is a pair of non-slip shoes, a warm hat, and good gloves. If you feel safer inside, check out malls, college gyms, and school facilities.

## 2. Skiing and snowboarding

Downhill, cross-country, two skis, one snowboard, so many options, so little time! To cut down on costs, check out local ski clubs or season passes. Watch for fall equipment sales and swaps – and get your body ready with some leg strengthening exercises.

## 3. Ice hockey and skating

More choices for kids, adults, and families. Check your local rink and park department for information about skating lessons, hockey leagues, or free skate times. Or, if you prefer wheels to blades, look into roller skating options.

## 4. Indoor sports leagues

Joining a team is an easy way to make physical activity fun. Most people are also more likely to show up when their volleyball or basketball teammates are depending on them. Find out what's available at YMCA/YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and fitness centers.

## 5. Fitness videos

You can stay fit and healthy without ever leaving the house. If you have a favorite video, use that. If you need something new and different, visit your local library or video store. They usually have fitness videos that you can rent or borrow before you buy to own.

## 6. Something totally different

One way to beat the winter blahs is with a new adventure or challenge. This might be the time to take class in something new – like belly dancing, synchronized swimming, ballet, fencing, yoga, or gymnastics. Always wanted to do something? Try it this winter!

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# **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 Tweens**

**September 2002**

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

**October 2002**

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

**November 2002**

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

**December 2002**

- **Moving toward a Healthy Weight Forever**



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*