



February 1, 2003

Dear Colleague:

Greetings! **Happy Valentine's Day** and **Heart Month** from Eat Right Montana! This is the second month of **Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere** and we are focusing on **mornings**. Our nutrition focus is on **breakfast, its benefits** and **how to make it fast and tasty**. We also discuss **energy bars** - and offer some fitness tips on easy ways to **get up and get moving**.

For nutritionists, breakfast is pretty much a no-brainer. However, according to USDA, breakfast consumption has declined in all age groups during the past 25 years. We obviously have plenty of work to do. First, we have to motivate people to eat any breakfast at all. Then, we can help them choose something healthier than a diet soda, a 500 calorie muffin or a coffee drink on steroids (like the cappuccino drinks at some coffee chains with 400 to 600 calories and 18+ teaspoons of sugar!).

Fortunately, there's tons of info online to help everyone **break** out of their boring morning routines **fast**. Check out these sites for new ideas, new recipes and more.

- **Dairy Council of California** @ www.dairycouncilofca.org/ The dairy industry has long been a strong supporter of school breakfast programs (for obvious reasons). Search on breakfast for research, media releases, lesson plans for teachers and tips for parents on how to "**Beat the Breakfast Rush Hour**."
- **Grains Nutrition Information Center** @ www.wheatfoods.org/ Grains growers also have every reason to support power breakfasts. There are plenty of options here: beautiful photos for presentations, tempting recipes, research tidbits and nutrition information of all sorts (from glycemic index to diet reviews).
- **Produce for Better Health Foundation** @ www.5aday.com/ Complete an early morning triple play - with **5 A Day The Color Way™**. Check out the delicious recipes, simple produce tips, excellent research summaries, policy discussions and dozens of links. Still the go-to fruit and veggie resource!

As always, we welcome feedback ~ so, please let us know what you think.

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**Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere: The power of breakfast
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Healthy Families 2003: Making the most of every morning (2nd in a series of 12)

In this case, the experts all agree: Eating a power breakfast can change your health – and your life. Moms, teachers, principals, athletes, coaches, dietitians, doctors and researchers all agree: Putting the right fuel into your body every morning can provide incredible benefits all day long.

“Eating any breakfast is better than no breakfast,” says Katie Bark, RD, registered dietitian with Montana’s Team Nutrition Program, “but the right breakfast can make a real difference. Breaking your overnight fast with the right combination of foods can help energize your whole day.”

The benefits of breakfast are almost limitless. Want to reach and maintain a healthy weight? Eat breakfast! Want higher test scores at school? Eat breakfast! Need to concentrate at work? Wish you were less crabby and irritable? Wish you could pump up your nutrient intake without an expensive vitamin? Have to lower your cholesterol levels? Want more energy at the gym? Eat a power breakfast every day!

No time in the morning, no problem! According to Bark, there are plenty of easy, tasty ways to give your body what it craves – fast! “A breakfast for champions is as simple as one, two, three,” she says. “One, start with a high-energy carbohydrate; two, add some protein; and three, finish with fruit.”

With these three steps, your breakfast can be sit-down or on-the-run. Enjoy a bowl of oatmeal sprinkled with almonds and raisins – or head out the door with a turkey-tortilla wrap and an apple. Take a bagel, string cheese and banana to work – or sit down to some tasty leftovers from last night’s dinner.

Eat Right Montana (ERM), a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to get on the nutrition fast track – first thing in the morning. Be traditional with eggs, Canadian bacon and whole wheat toast – or make your favorite sandwich the night before.

“Many Montana schools now offer breakfast,” says Bark, “because they know that it enhances academic success and behavior in the classroom. Make sure that your kids get the most out of school – by making sure that they start every day with the energy they need to succeed.”

ATTACHED: *Eating Well and Being Active ~ in the MORNING*

Eating Well ~ in the MORNING !!

Skipping breakfast is a no-brainer – literally. Skip breakfast – and your brain and body suffer all day. Eat well in the morning – and get on the nutrition fast track for a healthy day. Breakfast is easy (and essential) **ANYWHERE** – home, school, work or drive-thru.

WHY eat in the morning?

- 🎯 **RE-FUEL** your body after a long overnight fast.
- 🎯 **REV UP** your metabolism for healthy weight.
- 🎯 **KICK-START** your brain for school or work.
- 🎯 **IMPROVE** your mood and get rid of grumpy!

WHAT foods make a power breakfast?

- 🎯 **Carbohydrate:** A high-energy carbohydrate energizes your body and brain for a busy day. Think cereal (hot or cold), bread, muffins, rolls, tortillas or rice. Choose whole grains for an extra nutrition punch – more fiber and phytonutrients.
- 🎯 **Protein:** This is the missing link in most morning meals. Protein is what you need to go strong until lunch. Think lean – a slice or two of Canadian bacon, an egg, a slice of deli meat or cheese, a container of yogurt, a scoop of cottage cheese, or leftover meat.
- 🎯 **Fruit:** Breakfast is a great way to start on the 5 to 9 daily servings of produce your body needs for optimal health. Think fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit (and veggies) – like pears, apples, mangoes, berries, bananas, oranges, grapefruit, kiwi or pineapple.

HOW can I fit breakfast in my morning?

For most people, time is the biggest obstacle to eating in the morning. Fortunately, there are lots of easy ways to beat the breakfast rush hour – here are three tried and true tips.

- 🎯 **Get it ready the night before:** Set the table with bowls and spoons for cereal. Get out a pan for pancakes or a blender for smoothies. Slice up some fruit and cheese.
- 🎯 **Keep it real simple:** Fancy breakfasts are wonderful when you have the time. On busy days, a sandwich, a slice of leftover pizza or a yogurt with fruit work just fine.
- 🎯 **Pack it to-go:** If there's no time to eat at home, take your nutrition-to-go. Save time (and money) by packing both a brown-bag breakfast and lunch the night before.



**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2003**

Being Active ~ in the MORNING !!

Talk to one of those cheerful “morning people” – and they’ll tell you how great it feels to get up and get going early in the day. Whether you do 5 minutes or 45 minutes of activity in the morning, the benefits can make a big difference in your whole day.

WHY be active in the morning?

- ✓ **ENERGIZE** your body for the busy day ahead.
- ✓ **FOCUS** your brain for tasks at work or school.
- ✓ **FLEX** your muscles for all-day strength.
- ✓ **STRETCH** your body and your mind for new challenges.

WHAT activities fit best into the morning?

Any physical activity can fit into the morning hours. If you go outside when it is still dark, just make sure to put safety at the top of your fitness list – with reflective clothing and shoes. In terms of physical activity, it’s always better to be safe than sorry.

- ✓ **Stretching activities:** Slow and gentle stretches, like yoga, are a wonderful way to warm up your muscles, tendons and ligaments.
- ✓ **Balance activities:** Try a Tai Chi tape or one of the new exercise balls to improve your balance – and make a healthy mind-body connection.
- ✓ **Fun activities:** For a new outlook on life, start your day with something that makes you smile – like a salsa dance video or a splashy water aerobics class.

HOW can I fit fitness into my morning?

- ✓ **Get up 5 or 10 minutes early:** If you’re not a morning person, start small and set the alarm just a little earlier. Remember, you don’t have to get all your activity at one time. Even 10-minute “sparks” of fitness can get you onto a fast track to health.
 - ✓ **Get clothes, shoes and equipment ready the night before:** Take a few minutes before bedtime to get yourself organized for an early walk or trip to the gym. It’s one more way to make physical activity a normal part of your morning routine.
 - ✓ **Get together with friends or family:** Making a commitment to someone else can motivate you when sleeping in seems tempting. Walking kids to school is a triple fitness play – activity for you, activity for them and quality family time too!
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Are Breakfast Bars the Answer??

Maybe – but you have to be a smart shopper!!

Energy bars are everywhere these days – magazine ads, supermarket shelves, pharmacy displays, health food stores and convenience store counters. The packages are filled with promises – to boost energy levels, to replace entire meals, to promote weight loss, and to bolster intake of protein, vitamins and minerals.

Before you bite into an energy bar for breakfast (or any other meal), you may want to think twice – and do some careful label reading too! Here are a few things to check:

✓ **Calories, fat and sugar??**

There's no magic "pep" in these bars. The energy is from calories, just like other foods. Some energy bars are more like "souped up" candy bars – with plenty of fat, saturated fat and sugar. Check the calories – up to 300+ in some bars. That's quite a snack!!

✓ **Protein??**

If you are using bars as a meal replacement, choose a product with at least 10 to 15 grams of protein. Most bars use whey, casein (both from milk) or soy as their protein source.

✓ **Fiber??**

Look for bars with 3 or more grams of fiber per serving. Also, remember to drink plenty of water with these bars, since they are very dense and can slow down your GI tract.

✓ **Taste??**

Many products have failed taste tests (or bar exams?) by various groups. If you're not satisfied with the taste of any food, you are likely to "make up" by eating more later.

✓ **Alternatives??**

An energy bar is certainly not the only way to enjoy a quick, portable breakfast or snack. There are many delicious ways to boost your energy level – and get more nutrients, like:

- Low-fat yogurt topped with crunchy cereal and sliced fruit
- String cheese with whole grain crackers and a bag of baby carrots
- Trail mix made with cereal, nuts, dried fruit and a few chocolate chips

✓ **Best bars??**

In a January 2003 review, *Environmental Nutrition* newsletter gave these bars their highest nutrition rating – but did not discuss taste or cost factors.

- **Boulder Bar** (Boulder Berry)
- **Clif Bar** (Chocolate Chip Peanut Crunch)
- **Power Bar** (Chocolate Peanut Butter)
- **Soy Sensations** (Chocolate Fondue)

Provided by Eat Right Montana

Healthy Families 2003

Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere: Taking charge of your eating and your life

January 2003

- Nutrition and Physical Activity, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE!!

February 2003

- Healthy options in the morning

March 2003

- Healthy options at noon

April 2003

- Healthy options in the evening

May 2003

- Healthy options between meals

June 2003

- Healthy options at work

July 2003

- Healthy options on the road

August 2003

- Healthy options while camping

September 2003

- Healthy options at school

October 2003

- Healthy options for hunting

November 2003

- Healthy options in restaurants

December 2003

- Healthy options at celebrations



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles