



July 1, 2003

Dear Colleague:

In recognition of the summer travel season, our July topic is **healthy options on the road**. With safety and health in mind, we offer simple ways to **eat well on road trips, stay fit on road trips, and keep your cooler cool** on hot days. We hope that these ideas help you and your clients enjoy an active and delicious summer – whether traveling across town or across the country.

Since fast food is such a common part of road trip cuisine, you may want to check out the latest drive-thru additions. Here are examples from Arby's and McDonald's:

- www.arby.com/arb06.html
Arby's restaurants have taken on a fresh new look with "Market Fresh" salads and sandwiches (featuring sliced deli meats and cheese, lettuce, tomato and onion on whole grain breads). Although the sandwiches are a bit pricey compared to the typical burger, they get rave reviews from teens for taste – and they are large enough to share with a friend. With this online nutrition info, you can compare them to other Arby's menu items.
- www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/food/index.html
As part of its new corporate image, McDonald's has beefed up its menu with a line of premium salads, each with its own Newman's dressing. Like most chains, they feature nutrition analyses on their website. The new salads have from 90 to 380 calories (undressed). The dressings add another 90 to 290 (!!) calories.

For a more comprehensive view of the fast food and quick service restaurants that line American highways, check out this resource:

- **Three fat Chicks @ www.3fatchicks.com/fast-food-nutrition/**
This site has an unusual name, as well as the best database of restaurant food facts on the Internet. Their database includes information on chains from **Applebee's** to **Whataburger** and almost everything in between. Most of the nutrient data seems to be recent – and is presumably accurate since it is collected directly from the companies.

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

Crystelle Fogle (406) 947-2344 **Katie Bark** (406) 994-5641
Dayle Hayes (406) 655-9082 ~ EatRightMT2000@aol.com



Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere: Healthy Options on the Road
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Crystelle Fogle, MBA, RD
MT Department of Public Health and Human Services – 406/947-2344

Healthy Families 2003: Smart tips for summertime road trips (7th in a series of 12)

In Montana, and across the country, summertime means travel for many Americans. At any time of year, road trips mean long hours of sitting, along with gas station snacks and fast food meals.

“Smart food choices can make a big difference in how you feel – on and off the road,” says Jason Swant with the Department of Public Health and Human Services obesity prevention program. “Adding a few fitness breaks into your trip can also help you stay alert and focused. Nutrition and physical activity go hand in hand to help reduce stress – and to help the whole family be less cranky too!”

Fruits and vegetables – nature’s own fast foods – were made for dashboard dining. Most produce items are easy to eat without utensils and come wrapped in their own edible skin. Summertime is the perfect time to enjoy farm fresh bounty – from the grocery store, produce stand or farmers’ market.

According to Swant, safety is an important consideration whenever you eat in the car. “Anything that takes your attention away from the road is potentially dangerous,” he notes. “Eating with utensils or drinking very hot liquids can be especially distracting.” Here are three tips for safer dashboard dining:

- 1. Drink liquids with a straw.** Putting a cup to your lips can partially obscure your view of the road. A long straw makes it easier to hold a cup or glass lower down – and out of your line of sight.
- 2. Have small snacks within easy reach.** Keeping both hands on the wheel is the gold standard of safe driving. If you have to snack, put bite-sized pieces into your mouth one at a time.
- 3. Never eat or drink very hot items while driving.** Hot foods and beverages increase the chances of both car crashes and burns. Be safe, not sorry: Pull off the road and pay attention to your meal.

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to think safety and health on this summer’s road trips. “Roadside fitness opportunities can be found at any rest stop or park,” notes Swant. “A five or ten minute walk can help both your brain and your body. Physical activity helps maintain mental focus and reduce muscle fatigue at the same time.”

ATTACHED: *Eating Well and Staying Fit on Road Trips*

Three Tasty Ways to Eat Well on Road Trips

1. Bring food with you.

The best way to have control over food is always to bring your own. Whether it's a simple bag of snacks or a fully stocked cooler, bringing your own food saves money and time – and improves your nutrition. Here are some of the tastiest ways to eat well while driving down the highway:

- **Feast on nature's fast food – fruits and veggies.**

Fresh fruits, like apples, bananas and pears, are an obvious choice; so are bite-size veggies like baby carrots, celery sticks and grape tomatoes. Dried fruits, like cranberries, plums and mangoes, are another deliciously sweet option.

- **Put some protein power into your tank.**

Many car snacks (candy, chips and pop) are pure fat and sugar. Adding protein to your fuel mixture will help you feel more satisfied, so you can go longer before the munchies strike again. Slices of meat and cheese, in sandwiches or solo, are a great way to get protein.

2. Stock up at a supermarket.

For the best value and variety, make pit stops at a local grocery instead of a fast food restaurant or convenience store. Many supermarkets are only a few blocks from the highway, so shopping can be quick and efficient. Produce stands and farmer's markets can also be nutrition bonanzas!

- **Dine at the deli counter.**

Today's deli options are usually extensive and delicious. With careful selection, they can also be nutritious. Choose mixed veggie salads, like cole slaw, broccoli or three-bean – and ask the server to drain off as much of the liquid dressing as possible.

- **Snack at the salad bar.**

A quick trip around a well-stocked salad bar can offer much more than a salad. Fill a container with sliced fruit like watermelon, honeydew or cantaloupe. Refresh your veggie selection with broccoli and cauliflower florets, along with low-fat dressing for dipping.

3. Choose wisely at the gas station.

Believe it or not, you can even find some decent food and beverage choices at a truck stop or convenience store. Skip the candy bars and snacks at the counter (designed for impulse buying) – and check out the possibilities in the snack aisle and beverage cases.

- **Cool off with water, juice or milk.**

Soft drinks are not your only alternative these days. Choose bottled water (plain, sparkling or flavored), juice (100% fruit juices like ruby red grapefruit, orange or grape), or milk (reduced fat in plain, chocolate, vanilla, strawberry or banana!).

- **Go nuts in the snack aisle.**

Nuts and seeds are probably your best bet in most snack aisles. Remember to downsize your portion size. Super-sized bags may tempt you to eat more when the drive gets boring. Buy a small bag – or take out a reasonable amount and put the rest out of sight (and out of mind).



**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2003**

Five Fun Ways to Stay Fit on Road Trips

1. Walk around a rest stop.

Many rest stops are in scenic locations. Even when the scenery is boring, there are plenty of people to watch. Instead of jumping back into the car after your bathroom break, take ten minutes to stretch your legs. If you have a dog, that's a great reason for both of you to walk around the perimeter a couple of times. No dog? No problem! Take a couple of laps by yourself or with your travel companions. Remember, every step counts!

2. Explore a roadside attraction.

America's highways are lined with interesting and bizarre places to explore – from historical markers to giant sculptures of bison, fly rods and lumberjacks. On your next trip, plan to take a couple of 30-minute breaks to discover something new along your route. Physical activity helps drivers feel more alert – and makes kids less restless. And, who knows, you might create a wonderful family memory along the way!

3. Play in a park.

City parks, county parks, state parks, national parks, slides, swings, climbing structures, swimming pools, sandy beaches, nature trails, guided walks, more – and there are unlimited opportunities for active fun in parks and recreation areas across the country. Many are free – most of the others have reasonable admission fees. All you have to do is get out of the car and walk, run, stretch, swing, roll, climb or paddle your way to fitness.

4. Carry fitness "equipment" in your car.

Bikes, canoes and rafts are great ways to fit your fitness in as you travel. However, sports equipment doesn't need to be big, heavy or expensive in order to be fun and healthy. A bat and baseball, a Frisbee or a boomerang are all small, portable and cheap ways to have fun anywhere. A quick game of catch or Frisbee can be played by everyone – anywhere from a rest stop to an empty schoolyard.

5. Try some Commuter Aerobics™

If you'd like a bit more "serious" car-based workout, check out Commuter Aerobics™ by Cinder at www.commuteraerobics.com/. You can read about her specially designed exercises, including a rest stop series, online – or order an audiotape with background music for \$10.00. The idea is to practice proper posture and to strengthen various muscle groups while driving – following Cinder's safety guidelines at all times.



**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2003**

HOT Tips on Keeping Your Cooler COOL

1. Start with a clean cooler.

Before you head out for an extended camping trip (or an afternoon picnic), wash your cooler well with hot soap and water. If it's really dirty, clean it out with bleach.

2. Start with some solid ice.

Ice cubes tend to melt quickly and make a mess. Make your own ice blocks by freezing water in plastic milk jugs. Use commercial gel packs or "blue ice" packs.

3. Start with frozen or very cold foods.

Pack foods and drinks directly from fridge and freezer to cooler. Freeze as many items (like fresh meat and juice boxes) as possible. They'll help keep other stuff cold.

4. Pack items in order of use.

Place items that you will need last at the bottom of the cooler; first things to be eaten at the top. The less that you move things around, the colder everything will stay.

5. Pack in portion-size, leak-proof containers.

Use containers that hold the amount of food that you will need at one time. Make sure that lids fit tightly – or put containers into zip-lock plastic bags.

6. Pack foods separately.

Cross-contamination between foods increases the risk of food-borne illnesses. Keep cooked and uncooked foods separate. Pack all meat products away from other foods.

7. Keep coolers in the trunk.

The goal is to keep all food and beverages away from heat and direct sun as much as possible. In vans or trucks, keep your cooler covered or under other luggage.

8. Keep coolers in the shade.

Once you arrive at your picnic spot or camping site, place the cooler away from the sun. Cover with a blanket or tarp if there is no natural shade available.

9. Keep coolers closed as much as possible.

Every time you open a cooler, the inside temperature warms up slightly. Close the lid completely after each use; place a heavy object on top if necessary.

10. Clean your cooler thoroughly.

When you get home (or when refilling on long trips), scrub the cooler thoroughly with hot soap water and a dilute bleach solution (1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon water).



**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2003**

Healthy Families 2003

Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere:

Taking charge of your eating and your life

www.montanadieteticassociation.org/promo.html

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 throughout the day

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



This publication was supported by Award Number U50/CCU821287-01 from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adult and Community Health, through the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.