



October 1, 2003

Dear Colleague:

The focus of October's **Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere** packet is **healthy options in the backcountry**. Fall is a popular time for hunters, photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts to visit mountains and parks across the country. To help them maximize their healthy options, we offer tips on **food, fluids and fitness for backcountry trips**.

Many rural families (and plenty of city dwellers too) eat wild game meats. Food safety is critically important in dressing, preparing and cooking game meats, especially with concerns about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer and elk populations. Here are three online resources with up-to-date information about enjoying wild game safely – and one with a basic outline of backcountry cooking.

- **Wild Game Resources from North Dakota State University (NDSU)**
<http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/yf/foods/hunting/wildgame.htm>
NDSU has collected links to dozens of wild game and hunting resources on one page. Their Extension publications feature several “pocket guides” on handling game from field to table.
- **Cooking with Wild Game from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**
<http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/wellnessways/pdf/WILDGAMEcooking.pdf>
This five-page brochure has general information about preparing and cooking wild game, including cooking times, tasty marinades and simple recipes.
- **Fat and Cholesterol in Wild Game from Pennsylvania State University (PSU)**
<http://aqinfo.psu.edu/News/december00/game.html>
PSU provides the fat, cholesterol and calorie values for a short list of game meats compared to similar cuts of beef, chicken and pork.
- **Backcountry Cooking from Texins Outdoor Club**
<http://www.outdoorclub.org/BCook.html>
This easy-to-read article (from a Texas Instruments employee club) covers the basics of food, its preparation, packaging and storage for trips into the backcountry.

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

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**Fit and Healthy, Anytime, Anywhere: Healthy Backcountry Options
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Healthy Families 2003: Nutrition and fitness for outdoor fun (10th in a series of 12)

As the days get shorter, the nights get crisper and the colors turn towards fall, Montanans head for the backcountry. Some go hunting for wild game, and some go hunting for the perfect photo op. Many just want to enjoy a little more outdoor time before the snow flies.

“Unfortunately, many outdoor adventurers do not realize how important food and fluid are for backcountry safety,” says Dave Rowell, RD, (registered dietitian) with the Montana State Hospital. “Eating well and staying hydrated are essential for outdoor fun. They can also be a real lifesaver if you get disoriented, lost or stranded away from your vehicle.”

Getting enough fluids is essential for maximum physical performance and for optimal mental focus. Getting dehydrated can make it hard to function if you get into a difficult situation.

Personal hydration systems (backpack water carriers) are a great solution for hunters and hikers who want to avoid the hassle and noise of water bottles. “These leak proof bags carry several liters of water in a small space. Plus, you can drink all you need from the tube without stopping,” says Rowell.

It’s also good to have foods that are easy to eat while walking. For long-lasting energy, choose trail foods that are light in weight, high in calories and packed with protein. Jerky, cheese and nuts fit the bill on all three criteria. Energy bars and sandwiches with meat and/or cheese can also be good options.

If you want to travel light, have plenty of fuel before and after you hit the trail. Having the right foods and fluids in your vehicle can make all the difference, according to Rowell. “Hot oatmeal with nuts and dried fruit, hot chocolate made with low-fat milk and hard-boiled eggs are a great trailhead breakfast. Sandwiches, hot soup and juice are always tasty treats when you come back after a long day.”

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to enjoy healthy backcountry options this fall. Having the right foods and fluids will help you make the most of every beautiful day in Big Sky country.

ATTACHED: *Fitness Tips and Foods and Fluids for the Backcountry*

Ten Tips for Backcountry Foods and Fluids

The right stuff makes a big difference on backcountry trips. Having the right foods and fluids is as important as having the proper equipment and accurate maps. Eating right and staying hydrated helps maximize physical endurance – and mental concentration. If you get lost or are stranded, your nutritional status might be a real lifesaver. Here are ten tasty tips for fueling your next backcountry adventure:

1. **Start the day before:** Drink plenty of water and eat plenty of whole grains the day before a trip. This helps maximize the fluid and energy stored in your muscles.
2. **Take time to shop for food:** Make a list and shop smart for quality trail food. Last minute scrounging through your cupboards usually doesn't produce the best options.
3. **Mix up a batch of trail mix:** Buy a ready-made mix or combine your favorite nuts, sunflower seeds, dried fruit, cereal, small crackers and a few chocolate bits.
4. **Eat a high-octane breakfast:** Power your body for the day ahead with some quick energy (bagels or oatmeal) and long-lasting protein (eggs, Canadian bacon or cheese).
5. **Drink before you hit the trail:** Carry juice, low-fat milk and hot chocolate for the drive to the trailhead. Drink as much as you comfortably can before you start to hike.
6. **Bring a backpack full of water:** The new personal hydration systems allow you to carry 70 to 100 ounces of water – and to drink all you need without stopping.
7. **Drink before you feel thirsty:** The thirst mechanism doesn't kick in until you are already partially dehydrated. Drink often and regularly – 8 to 16 ounces every hour.
8. **Plan for fluid emergencies:** Always have a way to purify water (pump or pills) along the way. Dehydration can be disorienting, the last thing you want in the backcountry.
9. **Keep snacks ready-to-eat:** Keep trail mix or some nuts in your pockets. If you start to feel tired or cranky, don't wait for lunch. Fuel your muscles when they need it.
10. **Pack extra food:** Difficult situations can become disasters if you don't have enough fuel to think clearly – and to keep moving. Always carry an emergency supply of energy bars, nuts and jerky – above and beyond what you need for your current trip.



**Celebrating
Healthy
Families 2003**

Ten Fitness Tips for Backcountry Trips

Backcountry adventures can be lots of fun – or not! Your overall fitness has a big impact on your comfort level during, and after, a hike or hunting trip. Weekday couch potatoes who try to become weekend warriors often end up injured – or completely exhausted. Here are ten sensible tips guaranteed to make your next backcountry trip safer – and more enjoyable for you and those around you.

- 1. Be realistic:** If you've been sitting around for months, planning a 20-mile day hike or a two-week hunting trip is a recipe for a serious injury, a heart attack or worse.
- 2. Get a professional opinion:** If you already have health problems (like high blood pressure), check with your health care provider – before you go on an extended trip.
- 3. Stay in year-round shape:** “Use it or lose it” is more than a clever saying. If you are really out of shape, it can take 6 to 8 weeks to build up muscle tone and endurance.
- 4. Practice the activity you want to do:** The best way to get in shape for hiking is to walk up hills – even little hills. Walking up stairs can be a good substitute.
- 5. Focus on your core:** Your back and stomach muscles must be strong and flexible – for carrying packs, lifting game, twisting, starting and stopping. Think crunches!
- 6. Warm up your muscles:** Pushing too hard before your muscles have warmed up is one of the quickest ways to get injured. Start by gently swinging your arms and legs.
- 7. Build up slowly:** No one can get fit overnight. The best way to improve performance is to gradually increase effort. Need some personal help? Check with a fitness trainer.
- 8. Stretch, stretch and stretch again:** Slow stretching, not bouncing, helps prevent injuries and muscle soreness – especially if you stretch at the end of an activity.
- 9. Know your limits:** A real hero is the one who says it's time to turn back. Learn to gauge your endurance level – and start heading home before you are exhausted.
- 10. Pay attention to nutrition:** Food, fluids and fitness go hand-in-hand. Your muscles need the right fuel to train and to perform.



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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 the backcountry

November 2003

- Healthy options in restaurants

December 2003

- Healthy options at celebrations



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