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February 1, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the February 2004 issue of **Eat Right Montana's Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight**. Recognizing that **HOW** we eat (and move) is as important as **WHAT** we eat, we focus on the importance of **developing healthy routines**, especially for children. We have two new handouts on eating and activity routines, as well as an updated version of "**No More Food Fights**" – all about family mealtimes.

In our electronic age, the Internet is the place for everything from political fundraising to health management. If you are looking for daily, weekly, or monthly steps toward healthier lifestyles, here are three examples of the good stuff online.

➤ **Better Eating for Life (Mary Saucier Choate, MS, RD, LD)**  
[www.coopfoodstore.com/news/arch\\_bettereat.html](http://www.coopfoodstore.com/news/arch_bettereat.html)

Created by an RD for a cooperative grocery in New Hampshire, this site offers a year's worth of healthy steps toward better nutrition – with lots of links to additional information.

➤ **High CAL, Low CAL Meal Plan (National Dairy Council)**  
[www.whymilk.com/moms/featured\\_weightloss.htm](http://www.whymilk.com/moms/featured_weightloss.htm)

Developed with the American Dietetic Association and based on emerging research on the role of dairy in weight, this brand new site offers a week of menus, along with recipes and tips.

➤ **Walking for Fitness (About.com website)**  
<http://walking.about.com/>

If you can ignore the annoying ads, this site has great tips and free programs, a 10 week walking program, the I ditta-Walk 2004, and top-rated, self-guided walks across the USA.

Thanks for your past and future support of **Eat Right Montana**. Your feedback is always important to us; please let us know what you think. And remember, you can find a complete archive of past ERM packets at our website: [www.montanadieticassociation.org/promo.html](http://www.montanadieticassociation.org/promo.html)

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**Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight: #2. Develop a routine.**  
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**Healthy Families 2004: Regular routines important for families (2<sup>nd</sup> in a series of 12)**

Humans are creatures of habit. We develop routine, standard ways of living our lives, and then we stick to them for many years. Establishing healthy routines is actually easier than you might think.

“Regular routines, for eating and activity, are especially important for young children,” says Lori Rittel, registered dietitian (RD) with Montana’s WIC Program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children). “Kids thrive on a healthy routine of meals, snacks, and active play. Establishing early, healthy patterns is a simple way to prevent eating and weight problems later in life.”

Healthy routines can also help with parenting problems, like fighting over food at dinnertime. Small children do need to eat more frequently than adults. However, unstructured grazing on snack foods means that kids will not be hungry, or interested, when dinnertime rolls around. A healthy routine, like a nourishing mid-afternoon snack, helps kids come to the table with a healthy appetite and attitude.

According to Rittel, healthy routines help kids and their parents maintain a healthy weight. “The world is full of appealing, high-calorie foods – everywhere from the gas station to the mall. Without an alternative, it’s easy to eat and drink things just because they are there. Making it routine to carry some healthy snacks, like string cheese or trail mix, helps you resist temptation – and it saves money too!”

Developing healthy routines isn’t difficult. In fact, there are many simple steps that families can take to establish healthy habits. “Since we tend to eat or drink the first thing we find, making it routine to have cut-up fruit in the fridge makes it easy to snack smarter. Having milk and a pitcher of cold water on the top shelf makes it easy to choose a healthful beverage instead of a soft drink.” says Rittel.

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to develop some new routines for health in 2004. Over the course of a year, one or two simple changes can make a big difference in your health and your weight.

“Making physical activity routine is important too,” explains Rittel. “Children naturally love to move their bodies. Turn off the TV – and take a few minutes every day to play with your kids. If the weather is nice, take a walk outside. If it’s cold or snowy, turn on the music and dance in the house.”

**ATTACHED: *Developing Regular Eating and Physical Activity Routines***



## 12 Reasons to Develop a Regular Eating Routine

- 1. Food is everywhere:** From the gas station to the mall, from the candy dish at work to the chips at home. Without a regular eating routine, it can be hard to resist temptation.
- 2. Grazing can lead to overeating:** Without an eating routine, it's easy to graze on whatever food you find. Many people keep picking at food – without ever feeling satisfied.
- 3. Skipping meals can lead to overeating:** Trying to eat less by skipping breakfast or lunch often backfires – and you end up eating more calories in snacks and dinner.
- 4. Getting over-hungry can lead to overeating:** When you are really hungry, it is hard to make healthy choices. It's also hard to eat slowly and to stop when you are satisfied.
- 5. Mindless eating can lead to overeating:** It's also hard to make healthy choices and to stop eating – when you are doing other things, like driving, reading, and watching TV.
- 6. Television can lead to overeating:** TV advertisements and shows are full of food cues – specially designed to make you want to eat whether you are physically hungry or not.
- 7. Routines help maintain a healthy weight:** Establishing regular times and places to eat helps to prevent overeating – and helps you balance your eating with your activity level.
- 8. Routines help build healthy habits:** Develop a routine of cutting up fruit after dinner. You can enjoy some for a naturally sweet dessert and pack the rest for tomorrow's snacks.
- 9. Routines help with planning and shopping:** When you have a regular pattern of meals and snacks, it is easier to plan healthy choices – and easier to make shopping lists.
- 10. Routines help save money:** Buying food on impulse is usually more expensive. It's much cheaper to plan ahead – and to have healthy choices available when you want to eat.
- 11. Children do better with a regular eating routine:** A regular pattern of meals and snacks helps children maintain the ability to eat when hungry and stop when satisfied.
- 12. Different patterns work better for different people:** Some people feel better with three meals and a snack; others prefer five smaller meals. Choose the best pattern for you!



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Celebrating  
Healthy Families  
2004



## 12 Ways to Make Physical Activity Routine

- 1. Choose the right activity for you:** Different body types do better with different physical activities. Not every body is built for running, but every body can find a way to get fit.
- 2. Choose the right time:** Some of us are naturally morning people; others prefer to be active at the end of the day. Listen to when your body likes to move and it will be more fun.
- 3. Choose the right goal:** Goals can motivate us, if we choose the right one. Some people like the challenge of entering a race; others like to set a goal for a certain number of steps.
- 4. Choose the right speed:** Some people like high-energy activities, like aerobics or jazz dancing. Others like something slower and calmer, like a yoga class or swimming.
- 5. Choose the right shoes:** Comfort is essential for physical activity. When your feet hurt, it makes activity hard to do. Choose shoes that fit well and that are right for your activity level.
- 6. Choose the right equipment:** Any activity is more fun when it feels good. Bicycles, rackets, and weights all come in different sizes and styles. Choose the right ones for your body.
- 7. Make it fun:** When we enjoy an activity, we want to make it part of our day. The best physical activity is one that you enjoy, because you will be able to make it a regular routine.
- 8. Make it easy:** Keep comfortable shoes by the door or in the car, so it's easy to take a walk. Set out comfy clothes the night before, so getting ready for activity is just routine.
- 9. Join a class:** Scheduling a class creates its own routine. Once we get into a new routine, it's easier to stick with it over time (and a new habit takes at least 21 days to establish).
- 10. Do it with friends:** When we are accountable to someone else, it helps us get out and be active. You can join a class together – or just plan to meet for a neighborhood walk.
- 11. Keep a record:** Research shows that self-monitoring is a key to a healthy weight. You can track your activity in different ways, like minutes per day or steps on a pedometer.
- 12. Reward yourself:** Becoming more active is a gradual process. Just think how long you've been sitting around. Give yourself a big pat on the back for any increases in physical activity.



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# No More Food Fights

Establishing healthy eating habits has lifetime benefits. According to child nutrition expert Ellyn Satter, the key to a healthy feeding relationship is a division of responsibility between the parent (or other caregiver) and child.

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## Adult's Feeding Responsibilities

- Choose and prepare foods.
- Provide regular meals and snacks.
- Make eating times pleasant.
- Offer chances to learn new skills.

## Children's Eating Capabilities

- Children know how much to eat.
  - Children will eat a variety of food.
  - Children will grow predictably.
  - Children's eating will mature.
- 

## Five easy ways to enjoy meals without squeals

### 1 - Make regularly scheduled meals a family priority.

Young children need the reassurance of structured meal and snack times. Eating on the run may seem OK for adults, but it doesn't work well for children. Whether you are eating at home or "on the road," take the time to sit down and eat with your child.

### 2 - Avoid pressuring or forcing children to eat.

Most adults have good intentions when they try to force children to eat "healthy" foods or to try new items. The problem with pressure is that it doesn't work – ever. Kids like foods LESS if they are forced to eat them – or if they are given bribes or rewards.

### 3 - Have realistic expectations for mealtime behavior.

It takes time for kids to master new skills, like table manners. Adults need to lay out clear expectations for mealtime behaviors and to reinforce appropriate behavior. Kids need to know, ahead of time, that they will have to leave the table if they misbehave.

### 4 - Model the habits you want children to develop.

Young children do not automatically know how to eat like "big people." They will learn how to eat and how to behave at the table by watching you. You can show children how to enjoy a variety of foods – and how to be adventurous with new foods.

### 5 - Share the joy of eating as a family.

Eating well is one of life's greatest pleasures. When you're eating at home, turn off the TV, sit down at the table, and enjoy some time together. When you're eating in the fast food lane, take time to eat at the restaurant – or make it a picnic in the park.



**Celebrating  
Healthy  
Families 2004**

# HEALTHY FAMILIES 2004

## Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight

JANUARY 2004

1. Keep a record.

FEBRUARY 2004

2. Develop a routine.

MARCH 2004

3. Balance food and activity.

APRIL 2004

4. Take a daily dose of moderation.

MAY 2004

5. Enjoy variety every day.

JUNE 2004

6. Take time for health every day – at home.

JULY 2004

7. Take time for health every day – at work.

AUGUST 2004

8. Take time for health every day – on vacation.

SEPTEMBER 2004

9. Take time for health every day – at school.

OCTOBER 2004

10. Take time for health every day – around town.

NOVEMBER 2004

11. Take time for health every day – at organizations.

DECEMBER 2004

12. Celebrate the joy of health every day.



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# Lewis and Clark Fitness Challenge

Welcome to the Lewis and Clark Fitness Challenge, an integrated program for fourth and fifth graders developed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Eat Right Montana Coalition. The overall goal of this program is to motivate families and children to engage in regular physical activity. While children learn about Lewis and Clark's Expedition in the classroom, you can use this program to integrate lesson plans on Nutrition and Fitness into the regular curriculum. At the same time, classroom and health enhancement teachers can promote the Lewis and Clark Fitness Challenge by encouraging students to reach a goal of "traveling" along the westward Lewis and Clark trail by accumulating daily physical activity.

The objectives of this program are:

- ✓ To motivate children, teachers and families to eat well and be more active while learning about the Lewis and Clark Expedition through Montana.
- ✓ To improve the fitness of children in Montana.

The materials contained within the Lewis and Clark Fitness Challenge kit will provide you with sixteen lesson plans to help you integrate nutrition and fitness into your lesson plans on Lewis and Clark. Check it al out @

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/L&CFitness.html>