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April 1, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

Happy Spring – and welcome to the April 2004 issue of **Eat Right Montana's Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight**. This month we focus on the benefits of **moderation** – in **servicing sizes** and **TV watching**.

The super-sizing of America's foods and beverages has become more than a nutrition concern recently. Portion distortion is now a legal, regulatory, and, in some circles, a moral issue. On March 8th, the Wall Street Journal weighed in with a **Supersize Silliness** opinion, berating McDonald's for caving into pressure from "food nannies." This was a response to McDonald's decision to phase out super-sized items.

In response to lawsuits and threats of government fines, companies are making positive changes. McDonald's reformatted website (www.mcdonalds.com/usa.html) clearly positions a balanced lifestyle and nutrition information as part of the chain's philosophy. Ruby Tuesday is rolling out a **Smart Eating™** menu on April 27th, along with a promise to list the calorie, fat, carbohydrate, and fiber content of its menu items (www.rubytuesday.com/SE/default.htm).

While these laudable changes are in a healthful direction, American consumers still need lots of help managing today's mega-portions – and changing their couch potato ways. Here are two websites to help you communicate the needed food and fitness changes more effectively.

➤ **Food and Brand Lab (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)**
<http://www.foodpsychology.com/>

Research and tips about why, what, when, and how much we eat

➤ **TV Turnoff Network: Turn off TV, Turn on Life.**
www.tvturnoff.org/

How to celebrate the 10th Annual TV Turnoff Week (April 19-25)

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.

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**Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight: #4. Moderation in all things.
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Healthy Families 2004: Taking less, enjoying it more (4th in a series of 12)

You've probably heard the joke about being on a 'seefood' diet – meaning that whenever you see food, you eat it! Today's super-sized servings mean that American families are seeing – and eating – larger portions at home, in restaurants, and wherever they buy food.

“The amount of food in front of us has a big effect on how much we eat,” says Lori Rittel, registered dietitian (RD) with the Montana WIC Program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children). “Studies show that kids and adults eat 25 to 50 percent more food when served large portions. Bigger servings make us eat faster, take bigger bites, and consume more calories.”

Large serving sizes are just one of the many reasons why we eat and drink more than we think. The size of dishes and glasses also affects how much we consume. Children and adults pour more (and drink more) when they use shorter, wider glasses rather than taller, skinnier ones.

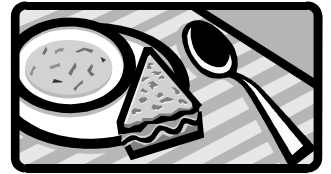
Another problem, according to Rittel, is the large size of food packages – especially snack packages like bags of chips and boxes of candy. “When people eat straight out of the package, they eat more than they think. An easy way to enjoy food in moderation is to never eat out of the bag. Take a small portion, put it in a small bowl, and put the bag away. Food that is out of sight is out of mind.”

Moderation is also important in other aspects of family life – like the amount of time we spend watching TV, playing video games, and working on the computer. Turning off the TV and choosing “screen time” carefully gives families more time to enjoy each other – and more time to be active.

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges Montana families to enjoy the benefits of moderation. Simple changes, like choosing smaller snack portions and more TV-free time, can make a big difference in your family's health and happiness.

“There is a direct connection between our TV habits and our eating habits,” says Rittel. “The average American child will see 40,000 TV food ads per year, mostly for high-fat, high-sugar items. Turning off the TV means your child will see fewer ads – and may do less whining to get those foods.”

ATTACHED: *Right-Size Your Portions* and *TV-Free Family Time*



12 Smart Ways to Right-Size Your Portions

There's no need to give up your favorite foods to manage your weight or improve your health. The biggest nutrition problem in American is not **WHAT** we eat – but **HOW MUCH** we eat. The key to healthful – and delicious – eating is to downsize your portions at breakfast, lunch, dinner, and especially snack time. Here are a dozen quick and easy ways to eat less – and enjoy more taste and nutrition in every bite.

- 1. Listen to your body's cues:**
Your internal signals of hunger and satisfaction can help you eat right, if you listen carefully and honor them.
- 2. Prepare less food for meals:**
Large quantities of food make people eat more. If you want leftovers, put them out of sight – and out of mind.
- 3. Start with a small serving:**
Small servings may be exactly what you want – and you can always have more if you are still hungry.
- 4. Use small dishes and glasses:**
It really works: smaller plates and taller, thinner glasses make you think that you are getting more with less.
- 5. Slow down the pace of eating:**
Eating slowly enhances enjoyment of food and beverages – and gives your brain time to register fullness.
- 6. Eat half, wait 20 minutes:**
When you wait (and listen carefully to internal cues), you can be satisfied with smaller than usual portions.
- 7. Never eat out of the bag:**
When you eat out of bags, boxes, or cartons, you usually eat more. Take a small portion; then put the bag away.
- 8. Think before you order:**
Many restaurant meals are two to four times larger than you need. Make a plan before you order.
- 9. Always go for the small size:**
At fast-food restaurants, order small or regular items (drinks, burgers, and fries) – or choose a kiddie-size meal.
- 10. Share, share, share:**
Sharing restaurant meals is a great way to save money and calories too. Share appetizers, entrées, or desserts.
- 11. Eat half, take half home:**
Ask your server to put half your meal into a to-go container in the kitchen or to bring a box to the table.
- 12. Eat regular meals and snacks:**
When you plan regular meals and snacks, it's easier to be satisfied with smaller portions each time.



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**Celebrating
Healthy Families
2004**



12 Fun Ways to Enjoy TV-Free Family Time

Turning off the TV is an easy way to enhance your family's health – and happiness. More screen time (TV, computers, and video games) leads to higher weights for both adults and children. TV time leads to weight gain, because people are more sedentary – and because they see so many food ads (about 40,000 a year). Turning off the TV will help your family maintain a healthy weight – and give you precious time together.

- 1. Snuggle up and read a book:**
Reading together as a family is one of the best ways to insure your children do well in school.
- 2. Snuggle up and tell a story:**
Telling stories is another way to enhance children's verbal skills – and to share special memories.
- 3. Snuggle up and sing a song:**
Kids don't care if you can carry a tune and they love to sing with you, learning new words along the way.
- 4. Snuggle up and talk:**
Turning off the TV gives you more time to talk – and more time to share your family values with children.
- 5. Snuggle up and listen:**
You learn more about your children by talking less – and listening more. If you listen, they will talk.
- 6. Just snuggle up together:**
The biggest benefit of turning off TVs, computers, and video games is that your family can grow closer.
- 7. Get up and take a walk:**
A simple neighborhood walk gives you time together – and an easy way to get fit and strong together too!
- 8. Get up and dance:**
Dancing combines fun and fitness for every age. Let your kids pick the music – and teach you the moves.
- 9. Get up and play a game:**
Pick the right game for your child's skills – like tossing a foam ball with a toddler or baseball with older kids.
- 10. Get up and play with a pet:**
Dogs and cats need activity too – to maintain a healthy weight and live long, healthy lives with you.
- 11. Get up and play with friends:**
Kids (and adults) need time to play with their friends – in the backyard, at the park, or in the wilderness.
- 12. Get up for a family fun night:**
Plan a weekly fun activity, like riding bikes or bowling with another family. Make it a weekly thing!



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**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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