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December 1, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the final issue of our 2004 campaign **Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight**. With many thanks to December's sponsors, **Montana Dietetic Association** and **American Heart Association**, we discuss **simple ways to celebrate a healthy lifestyle, delicious ways to enjoy nutrient-rich feasts, and the joy of everyday fitness.**

For the past twelve months, we have focused on the simple steps that families can take to manage their weight healthfully and effectively. As the hype gradually fades from the recent low carb frenzy, there is more and more talk about simple and realistic solutions to the ever-expanding American waistline.

As health communicators, we must join with these sensible voices – to sing the praises of realistic strategies for daily nutrition and fitness. We must also acknowledge the consumer research showing that Americans know what to do when it comes to their health, but they need practical advice on how to make healthy choices.

If you need some additional help communicating positive, practical, and consistent messages in your work, here are a couple of resources to help you – especially with holiday tips and recipes.

➤ **Wellness IN the Rockies Educational Materials**

<http://crhreweb.uwyo.edu/WinTheRockies/edmaterials.asp>

This MT/WY/ID-based research project has dozens of tested materials that can be downloaded and used at no charge.

➤ **American Heart Association (AHA) Simple Solutions**

<http://www.s2mw.com/simplesolutions/>

This free AHA program targeted at women provides tips and tools for a heart-healthy lifestyle. Also available in bookstores this month, **The American Heart Association Cookbook (7th Edition)**

Thank you for your past and future support of **Eat Right Montana**. Feedback is always important to us; please let us know what you think.

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**Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight: #12. Celebrate the joy of health.
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Healthy Families 2004: Taking time for healthy holidays (12th in a series of 12)

‘Tis the season for lists – to-do lists, gift lists, wish lists, and guest lists. Unfortunately, most holiday lists lack time for regular nourishing meals and physical activity. Just when we need them the most, we are too busy for these basic healthy habits.

“Putting nutrition and fitness on your holiday lists can make a big difference in your health, your weight, and your stress level,” says Linda Melick, RD (registered dietitian), president of the Montana Dietetic Association. “This is the season to celebrate – and it is important to celebrate health along with all the joys of the holidays. In fact, good health is what allows us to enjoy everything else.”

There’s no need to wait until the New Year to make some healthy resolutions. Melick suggests a few simple strategies for making the holiday season both healthier and happier.

- **Be realistic:** Holidays are not the time to try to lose weight – or to follow a strict diet. If you do, you are setting yourself up for failure, disappointment, and unnecessary stress.
- **Be sensible:** Enjoy all your favorite holiday treats – in moderation. Use smaller plates, bowls, and glasses – so that smaller servings will satisfy your eyes and your stomach.
- **Be adventurous:** Try some new, healthful holiday recipes – like those in the latest edition of *The American Heart Association Cookbook* (available in bookstores now).
- **Be active:** A few extra seasonal calories won’t matter much – if you stay active. Physical activity is also a positive way to burn off those extra holiday stresses.
- **Be flexible:** If you can’t get to your regular aerobics class or it is too cold to walk outside, have an alternative plan for activity – like a half hour walk at the mall before shopping.

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to take time for nutrition and fitness during the holidays. Taking a few minutes to eat some fresh fruit and veggies, or taking a stroll with a friend, are easy ways to celebrate the joy of health.

“You can also give the gift of health to family and friends,” says Melick. “Just add a heart healthy cookbook, a cheerful fruit basket, a yoga mat, or a pedometer to your holiday shopping list.”

ATTACHED: *Nutrient-Rich Holiday Feasts and the Joy of Fitness*

Nutrient-Rich Holiday Feasts ~ From Soup to Nuts

Nutrient-rich foods are the best that nature has to offer – whole foods that deliver more nutrition than pills and supplements. With bright colors and delicious flavors, nutrient-rich foods are a gift on any holiday table. Calorie for calorie, they provide more of the nutrients you need to maintain your weight, enhance your health, and reduce your stress during this hectic time of year.

Here are a dozen easy ways to add nutrient-rich foods to all your holiday feasts.

1. SOUP:

Go for thick soups – like navy bean or roasted veggies. For cream soups with less fat, use low-fat buttermilk.

2. APPETIZERS:

Make it simple: broccoli trees and baby carrots with low-fat dip – or refreshing sliced citrus fruit.

3. SALAD:

So many festive options – like mixed greens with sliced pears, strawberries (or raisins), and chopped walnuts.

4. MEAT ENTREES:

For extra holiday flavor, rub a lean beef or pork roast with a mixture of your favorite herbs and spices.

5. FISH ENTREES:

Salmon makes a super centerpiece for a feast – especially surrounded by snap peas and roasted red potatoes.

6. POULTRY ENTREES:

Stuff all your holiday birds with whole grain breads or wild rice mixed with plenty of vegetables.

7. VEGETABLES:

Add lots of nutrition value for little money with winter veggies (beets, carrots, squash, pumpkin, and yams).

8. PASTA and RICE:

Whole grain pastas and brown rice mixtures add chewy textures, rich flavors, and an extra serving of fiber.

9. BREADS:

To pack a nutrition punch into your breadbasket, fill it with whole grains – rolls, breadsticks, or crackers.

10. DESSERTS:

Nutrient-rich desserts are easy – just start with a brightly colored fruit like cranberries, pineapple, or oranges.

11. FRUIT and CHEESE:

Or try a European finish to your feast – with a flavorful cheese (like Edam or gouda) and crisp apple slices.

12. NUTS:

As a snack – or a healthy stocking stuffer, nuts are a popular treat. A handful is the perfect serving size!



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**Celebrating
Healthy Families
2004**

The Joy of Fitness ~ From Morning 'til Night

The key to lifetime fitness is simple. Find physical activities that you enjoy – and do them regularly. Fitness experts have determined that the ‘enjoyment factor’ is essential for success. If you enjoy activity, you won’t dread – and avoid – finding time to exercise. Different people enjoy different activities – so the real key is to find a variety of activities that bring a smile to your face and a bounce to your feet.

Here are twelve joyful ways to make fitness an everyday activity for your family.

- 1. Greet the day with a stretch:**
Early morning activity can energize your day. Even a few gentle stretches can make a big difference.
- 2. Walk a dog – or several dogs:**
New research shows that both dogs and their people lost weight and gained fitness with daily walks.
- 3. Play with a child:**
Kids naturally love to move their bodies, so moving with them is bound to be fun – indoors or out.
- 4. Balance your day with yoga:**
Studies show that yoga is good for your body – and even better for stress reduction and relaxation.
- 5. Splash in a pool:**
If moving around on land is hard on your joints, a water aerobics class or lap swim can be a real pleasure.
- 6. Toss a ball with friends:**
A pickup game of basketball at the gym? An evening volleyball league? Or just a soft foam ball with a child?
- 7. Do it to music:**
Any activity goes faster when you listen to something. Pick some up-beat tunes or listen to books on CD.
- 8. Kick up your heels:**
Even short bursts of activity improve your health. All it takes is 10 minutes of activity, 3 times a day.
- 9. Do something silly:**
Laughter is good for everyone. It moves all the muscles on your face, relieves tension, and reduces stress.
- 10. Make it a family thing:**
A family that plays together, stays healthy together. Give every person a chance to choose a favorite activity.
- 11. Try a totally new activity:**
Try yoga, Pilates, tai chi, kickboxing, or the hottest new trend in fitness classes – belly dancing!
- 12. Dance with someone you love:**
It’s the perfect holiday combination – activity for your body, music for your ears, and joy for your heart.



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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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