



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

www.eatrightmontana.org

January 2009

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year - and welcome to the 11th year of Eat Right Montana's Healthy Families packets!! With our new graphics and monthly recipe, 2008 was a banner year for Healthy Families. Media response to the new features was outstanding. Our releases and handouts were repeatedly featured in print, radio, and TV spots across Big Sky country.

With our 2009 theme - *Going Green: Simple Steps for Montana Families*, this year promises to be just as exciting and successful. In the next twelve packets, we will explore hundreds of realistic ways that families can enjoy good health for themselves and contribute to a healthy planet at the same time. Each month you can expect to find the following useful features:

- **Media release with 'green' success stories from Montana communities, large and small**
- **Healthful eating page with nutrition tips that are good-for-you and good-for-the-earth**
- **Recipe with at least one green-colored item, using local, seasonal foods when possible**
- **Active lifestyles page with lower-cost, less resource-intensive ways to get and stay fit**
- **ALL NEW**: Eco-Tips page with easy strategies to reduce your environmental impact

Most importantly, all tips in our 2009 packets will be eco-nomical to reflect the current tough economic times. We promise to steer clear of expensive specialty products and to focus on practical solutions that save money and are earth-friendly at the same time.

Our 2009 goal is to nourish today AND sustain tomorrow, as illustrated in this quote:

*Inevitably, in going about our daily lives - commuting, sheltering our families, eating - each of us contributes to the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change. Yet, there are many things each of us, as individuals, can do to reduce our carbon emissions. **The choices we make in our homes, our travel, the food we eat, and what we buy and throw away all influence our carbon footprint and can help ensure a stable climate for future generations.***

From the Nature Conservancy at www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator/

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Although we have an outline for each packet, we are eager to incorporate your input whenever possible. Just send your thoughts along to me at EatRightMT2000@gmail.com - and remember, past issues of **Healthy Families** and other ERM materials are available at www.eatrightmontana.org/.

Dayle Hayes, MS, RD

Healthy Families packets are made possible with the generous support of agencies, organizations, and individuals - like the wonderful 2008 sponsors listed on the right. Please help ERM continue our tradition of positive, practical health information by becoming one of our 2009 sponsors or with a supporting subscription of \$50 per year. To discuss sponsorship, please contact ERM Chair Katie Bark at kbark@mt.gov

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Going Green: Simple Steps for Healthy Families 2009

For Immediate Release



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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

January 1, 2009

Resolutions for Healthy Families in a Healthy Montana

Since January 1999, Eat Right Montana (ERM), a statewide coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles, has published a monthly packet of sound advice on nutrition and fitness. For its 11th year, the coalition plans to expand and enhance the practical tips it offers to Montanans with the 2009 theme - *Going Green: Simple Steps for Healthy Families*.

"Eat Right Montana recognizes that personal health, environmental health, and economic health are all necessary for this state to both thrive and maintain its natural beauty," explains Coleen Kaiser, MS, RD (registered dietitian) and MSU Extension Nutrition Educator in Bozeman. "Using the green theme, ERM will weave together environmentally friendly concepts, including eating green (local, sustainable agriculture), green fitness (active living with minimal resources), and waste reduction (recycling, etc.). Each issue will also have a delicious recipe with seasonal, green-colored foods."

The green theme is a great fit with Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Lead by Example initiative for Sustainable Government (www.deq.mt.gov/Recycle/LeadByExample.asp). Each of ERM's 2009 packets will focus on a community that is leading by example - by promoting gardens, school salad bars, trail days, breastfeeding, and more.

As a member of the Montana Food System Council, Ms. Kaiser is heartened by the steps that Montana is taking to support local agriculture. "One example is the new undergraduate degree in Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems (SFBS) at MSU, spearheaded by Dr. Alison Harmon and others." According to the **Grow Montana** network, if each household in Montana spent just \$10 per week on Montana-produced food, it would redirect \$186 million each year to local producers.

Fortunately, you don't need a degree to go green, feel better, and be healthier in 2009. Just make a family resolution to:

- **Enjoy more healthful, Montana foods:** Make your contribution to sustainable agriculture by purchasing at least \$10 per week of beef, barley, lamb, lentils, and numerous other products labeled as '*Grown in Montana*.' The dollars you spend will help to support agricultural families and contribute to vibrant, healthy communities in rural areas across the state.
- **Take more walks in Big Sky country:** There's no need for fancy fitness equipment or expensive gym memberships. Not when you have access to dozens of beautiful Montana parks and miles of wonderful trails for walking and hiking. Fitness experts agree that regular, brisk walking is one of the safest and easiest ways for people of all ages to get and stay fit.
- **Throw less trash away in the Treasure State:** The DEQ reports that Montana currently recycles 15% of the solid waste generated each year. Every family in the state can contribute to the goal of 22% by 2015 with some simple new habits, such as recycling newspapers and magazines, shopping with reusable bags, and composting food and yard waste.

"Going green isn't like an episode of extreme makeover," says Coleen Kaiser. "It's about making simple changes that add up to a big difference over the long run. With a few new habits, we can all have a seriously healthy impact on Montana."

Past and current issues of Eat Right Montana's monthly packets can be downloaded for free at

www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm

Going Green: Simple Steps for Healthy Families 2009

Understanding Current Food Lingo

As we have become more interested in the quality of our food and where it comes from, producers have begun to use different terms on packages. It is important to know exactly what these terms do and do not mean, so you can decide whether a particular product is right for your family and budget. Here are some brief definitions to help:

ORGANIC FOOD

The National Organic Program of the USDA (US Department of Agriculture) regulates all farming, wild crop harvesting, and handling operations that seek to sell products as organically produced. Organic crops are grown without common fertilizers, including petroleum- and sewage sludge-based fertilizers. Animals are given only organic feed, have access to the outdoors, and are not given growth hormones or antibiotics. USDA also regulates the importing and labeling of organic products from other countries. **Unless certified by USDA, foods and beverages may not be marketed as organic.**

NATURAL FOOD

Despite the widespread use of the term on food packages, **no government agency has a precise definition for 'natural'** (as of 12/08). In general, to be called natural, a product must be free of artificial or synthetic ingredients or additives, including color, flavor, or any ingredient "not normally expected." This means that lemonade flavored with beet juice or cheese colored with paprika cannot be called natural. The Food and Drug Administration continues to evaluate natural claims on a "case-by-case basis," while USDA is finalizing rules for the use of 'natural' on meat, poultry, and egg products.

LOCAL FOOD

Although 'locally grown' food is currently very popular, **the term does not have a legal definition.** One national chain defines local as anything grown in the same state as it is sold; another says that it is anything grown 7 hours or less from the store. The definition most commonly accepted by consumers is that local food is grown within 100 miles of where it is purchased. Since there is no definition for local, you may want to ask exactly where a food was grown and/or processed. To get the freshest, safest, most local food, visit growers and develop personal connections with farmers and ranchers.

FOOD MILE

Environmental concerns about the large amount of fuel and resources used to transport food around the world have led to the concept of a food mile. Basically, **a food mile is the distance that food travels from where it is grown to where it is ultimately purchased or eaten.** The more food miles associated with a food, the less sustainable and environmentally desirable that food is. For example, produce that is flown or shipped from South America to the US involves thousands of food miles, whereas produce purchased at a local farmer's market may involve fewer than 50 or 100 food miles.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The term 'sustainable agriculture' refers to a system of plant and animal production that will satisfy human food and fiber needs over the long-term. **It is a system that enhances environmental quality and makes the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources at the same time.** This type of agriculture also sustains the economic viability of farm operations and local communities, thereby enhancing the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and society as a whole. Groups across the country are working to increase the demand for more sustainable agriculture and food systems in local communities.



Delightful Waldorf Salad

Ingredients:

- 2 medium Granny Smith apples, cored and medium diced
- 1 large crisp red apple, Montana-grown if possible, cored and medium diced
- 3/4 cup chopped celery
- 3/4 cup dried fruit (Montana cherries, raisins, blueberries, etc.)
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt, low-fat or nonfat
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (walnuts, almonds, pecans, pistachios, etc.) PLUS 1/4 cup for garnish

Instructions:

- 1) Combine the apples, celery, dried fruit, and lemon juice in a bowl.
- 2) Stir in the yogurt and nuts.
- 3) Serve in individual bowls or on small plates with a lettuce leaf.

Yield: 6 servings (3/4 cup)

Ideas/Substitutions

- Substitute chopped red pear - or some red grapes (cut in half) - for the red apple.
- Sweeten the dressing by using low-fat vanilla yogurt instead of plain yogurt.
- Use sunflower seeds rather than nuts - as a garnish and mixed into the salad.

Nutrition Analysis

Serving Size: 3/4 cup

Calories: 181

Total Fat: 7 g

Calories from Fat: 35%

Saturated Fat: 1.0 g

Trans Fat: 0.0 g

Total Carb: 28 g

Dietary Fiber: 3 g

Sodium: 26 mg

Protein: 3.3 g

Calcium: 65 mg

Iron: 0.7 mg

Recipe Source

Adapted from **Today's Diet and Nutrition**

<http://www.todaysdietandnutrition.com/>

Green fitness routine: Smart Winter Walking

What, you might well ask, is a green fitness routine? Quite simply, green fitness is a way to improve your personal health while minimizing your use of resources. Driving five miles to the gym to walk on an electric treadmill for an hour uses fossil fuels, contributes to pollution, and also costs a fair amount in terms of your financial resources. A greener, cheaper way to get fit (and just as effective according to the experts) is to take an hour's walk right outside your front door. If you think walking stops when cold weather sets in, think again! Here's what you need to walk smart all winter long - whether you're walking in your neighborhood or around town on errands.

Smart clothes for your body

Walking experts have 3 main recommendations for comfort in colder weather. (1) **Dress in layers** (several thin layers are better than bulky layers). You will warm up as you move and may want to shed layers to minimize sweating (which makes you cold and uncomfortable). (2) **Wear a hat** (soft and warm rather than itchy or scratchy). Without a hat, heat is lost off your head and you'll cool more quickly. (3) **Wear gloves - or mittens**, which usually keep your hands warmer.

Smart shoes and stuff for your feet

For both comfort and safety, choices in footwear are critically important. **Sturdy boots or walking shoes with thick soles and deep treads are essential.** Make sure that your footwear is the right size to fit cold weather socks. Start with a pair of thick wool or synthetic socks; add thin, inner socks when it is really cold. If your winter walks are frequently icy or snowy, get a pair of slip-on grips or 'ice-trax' (many types are available online and in outdoor stores for under \$20).

Smart companions for fun and safety

It's always nice to have a walking companion; family, friends, and dogs are all wonderful. (Think of a dog as a treadmill with fur - walking is essential for their health and yours!) Walking with a family member or friend provides bonding time and lively conversations make the miles seem shorter in any season. **In winter, a companion also provides an added measure of safety in the event that you slip or fall** (much less likely with the proper footwear described above).

Smart accessories for everyone

Visibility is a concern for winter walkers and people who need to see them. Drivers may have difficulty seeing you due to shorter daylight, blowing snow, or glare on sunny days. **Fortunately, you and your pet can walk safely with LED lights and/or reflective clothing.** For under \$15, you can purchase different types of bright LED lights and reflective vests, hats, gloves, and belts, as well as dog leashes and collars. On days with lots of glare, sunglasses are also important for walkers.

Smart choices for your route

Finding a safe walking route is critical in any season of the year. However, routes that are perfect in spring, summer, and fall may not work in winter due to snow, ice, sleet, or rain. **Look for trails that drain well or are maintained for winter use.** If you live in a snowy part of the country, learn which sidewalks and parking areas are usually the first to be cleared after a storm. If conditions are bad, make the smartest choice of all; stay home until it is safe to get bundled up and go out.

How to go green with the **Five Rs of Waste Management**

Waste, and how we dispose of it, profoundly affects our global environment - air, water, land, animals (including people!), plants, and man-made things. If we want a healthy environment for our families and our earth, smart waste management is a skill we need to learn. The waste we create has to be carefully managed to minimize its impact on our personal health and the health of our planet. Here is a quick review of the 5 Rs of managing waste (3 that have been around for years, plus 2 newer ones), including simple steps you can take at the grocery store:

REDUCE

Reducing means producing less waste so that you throw away less trash and garbage into landfills. **Reducing** is the most effective way to manage waste and the place to begin whenever you can. A simple step at the grocery store: **Bring your own cloth or mesh bags**, so you don't take either paper or plastic! You have immediately **reduced** the bags you might throw into the trash when you get home. How to remember your bags? Always keep them in the car or right by the door.

REUSE

Reusing means getting the most out of things in their original form before you toss or recycle them. You can **reuse** things yourself - or pass them along to someone who can **reuse** them when you can't. **Reusing** is pretty simple once you get into the habit, like writing a shopping list on an opened envelope or the back of office paper rather than on a brand new sheet. **Plastic bags (both large white bags and clear produce bags) can be reused several times before they are recycled.**

RECYCLE

Recycling is the R that has caught on the best. However, **recycling** is not as easy as one would like - or even available in some Montana locations. **Recycling**, like using cans to make new cans, is better than throwing them into the landfill, but it still takes energy to collect, crush, and remake them. So, **recycle** after you have reused things as much as possible. **Reuse your plastic bags as many times as you can, then take them to the recycling bin available at many grocery stores.**

REJECT

Rejecting is one of the newer Rs. Some people also call it *pre-cycling*. In terms of smart waste management, this is the simple act of **rejecting** excessive or unnecessary packaging. **When shopping, it means saying "no thanks" to a bag for small purchases that you can easily carry in your hands.** You can also **reject** - choose to not buy - foods, beverages, or other products in fancy, multi-layer packaging that you will just have to throw into the trash as soon as you open them.

RESPOND/REACT/REWARD

This R goes by several different names, but they all come down to one thing: letting manufacturers and businesses know what you think about their waste management practices. You can contact them with a letter, an email, or by calling the toll free number listed on the package to voice concerns about excessive packaging. Or, you can let them know that you have noticed and appreciate when they are doing something positive for the earth. **Using the grocery bag example, you could thank your grocery store manager for selling inexpensive cloth bags and/or providing a way to recycle plastic bags.**