



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

www.eatrightmontana.org

October 2010

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the tenth issue of Eat Right Montana's 2010 campaign: *Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics with Food & Fitness.* In this packet, we focus on how Safe Routes to School (SRTS) can help children and communities, the tasty benefits of root vegetables, and how to quickly cook delicious veggies in the microwave.

Eat Right Montana is proud to serve as the sponsoring organization for the 2010 State Network Project for SRTS - and delighted to have SRTS network organizer Kathy Aragon featured in this month's media release. Check www.walktoschool.org/who/seestate.cfm?st=MT for a list of October 6th Walk to School Day events - and join the fun!

Media Release:

Safe Routes to School Improve Quality of Life for Montanans

Nutrition Basics:

Tasty Ways to Enjoy the Nutrient Richness of Root Vegetables

October Recipe:

Roasted Root Veggies

Cooking Basics:

Quick Ways to Microwave Delicious Vegetables

Fitness Basics:

Smart Ways to Enjoy Safe Bike Rides

We welcome any comments and suggestions. Wherever possible, we want to incorporate your ideas and put them into our packets. Just send your thoughts to me at EatRightMT2000@gmail.com - and remember, past issues of **Healthy Families** and other ERM materials are available on the ERM web site at www.eatrightmontana.org/.

Dayle Hayes, MS, RD

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Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics 2010

For Immediate Release



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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

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Safe Routes to School Improve Quality of Life for Montanans

Ah October in Montana! Fall is definitely here with final harvests in the farmers' markets, crisp mornings, cooler evenings, and families settled into their school day routines. For more and more Montana families, those routines include walking or biking to school - good for kids and communities as well.

"Walking and biking to school offers significant health benefits to individual children," says Kathy Aragon, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) State Network Organizer for Montana. "Beyond individual fitness, providing safe ways for youth to walk or bike to school is a really a quality of life issue for everyone. SRTS help make cities and towns healthier places to work and play, which is good for the whole community."

Getting to school on your own two legs used to be the norm for most American children. Currently, nearly 60 percent of children are driven to school in private cars - often for trips of a mile or less. Switching to leg or pedal power can help kids accumulate the 60 minutes of daily physical activity that they need for optimal health and to maintain a healthy weight. Research has shown that being physically fit may also help improve school performance, including standardized test scores and grade point averages.

SRTS also provide significant benefits to the environment, especially near school buildings. "When children lace up their sneakers or strap on a bike helmet instead of jumping in the car, it reduces the amount of air pollutants emitted by automobile exhaust," notes Aragon. "This pollution is particularly harmful to young children and anyone with respiratory problems like asthma. Creating safer streets for kids encourages other people to do more walking and biking, which helps to reduce car emissions and air pollution even more."

In January 2010, Montana was one of 20 states selected to participate in the State Network Project for SRTS, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Kaiser Permanente. With the sponsorship of Eat Right Montana, the Montana SRTS Network Project works with partners in health, education, planning, and transportation to make communities more walkable and bikeable for school children. According to Aragon, Florence, Montana, is an excellent example of what a community can do when everyone works together.

"Florence formed a SRTS committee of parents, teachers, and others to spread the word about walking and bicycling to school. All elementary health teachers participated in a 20-hour traffic education training and taught three weeks of classes about biking and walking skills," she explains. In addition to education, Free Cycles of Missoula collected over 180 recycled bicycles for the Florence Physical Education Program. The Florence Civic Club donated funds for parts and supplies, while community members volunteered to paint and restore the bicycles. Now, the entire Florence community reaps the benefit of more kids biking to school.

Walk to School Day is October 6, 2010, and many Montana schools will have festivities. For more info, go to www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes or contact Kathy Aragon at Montana@saferoutespartnership.org.

Past and current issues of Eat Right Montana's monthly packets can be downloaded for free at www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm

Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics 2010

5 Tasty Ways to

Enjoy the Nutrient Richness of Root Veggies

Aside from carrots (one of the most popular veggies in the US), most other root vegetables don't get the nutritional respect they deserve. These often forgotten residents of the produce department are packed with important nutrients, tasty in a variety of dishes, low in cost, and able to be stored for long periods of time.

1. Carrots

While most of us are very familiar with the bright orange version of this "rabbit food," carrots also come in purple, white, red, and yellow. They are delicious and crunchy when eaten raw - whole or grated into salads. Carrots are great in soups and they can also add nutrition, color, and sweetness to desserts, like muffins, bread, and cakes.

2. Beets

Beets also come in multiple colors - purple, gold, and white. Small beets are usually sweeter and more tender, with greens that are perfect for adding to salads (raw), stir-fries, and soups. Beet roots can be stored the fridge for up to 3 weeks, then steamed in the microwave, roasted in oven, or grilled outdoors (in thick slices or on a kebob stick).

3. Sweet potatoes

Talk about nutritious, delicious, and versatile, sweet potatoes (sometimes labeled as yams) are a best buy in any produce department. Substitute these nutrient-rich veggies for their pale white cousins in almost any dish (peeling them first) : baked, mashed, roasted, boiled and chopped for salad, or sliced, oiled, and baked for oven fries.

4. Turnips and rutabagas

While these roots come from the same family, rutabagas are usually larger and sweeter. Turnip shapes vary from round to cylindrical and come in colors from rose to black, as well as white. Both can be cooked like potatoes (baked, boiled, roasted, and mashed). They can be grated like cabbage into slaw and stir-fried with more colorful veggies.

5. Kohlrabi

One of the lesser known root veggies, kohlrabi tastes like a delicious, crunchy cross between a cucumber and mild broccoli (it's from the same family as broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower). Look for purple or green kohlrabi bulbs. Both have white inner flesh, which can be eaten raw (like jicama) or cooked. Leaves can be used like beet greens.



Roasted Root Vegetables

Ingredients:

- 4 medium-sized root vegetables (choose a variety from potatoes, rutabagas, turnips, parsnips, beets, sweet potatoes, etc.)
- 2 chopped carrots
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 3-4 Tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
- 3 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- Season with your favorite spices

Instructions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- 2) Cut vegetables into large chunks.
- 3) Place in a medium bowl and pour oil over top. Add Parmesan cheese and seasonings. Mix well.
- 4) Spread an even layer on a baking sheet.
- 5) Bake for about 1 hour or until tender. Start checking the vegetables at about 45 minutes to see if they are the proper texture.

YIELD: 4 servings (approx. 1 cup each)

Suggestions:

Roasting root vegetables adds a delightful sweet flavor. Cut vegetables into chunks that are similar in size so they will finish roasting at the same time.

Some seasoning options:

- 1/4 teaspoon of dried thyme, 1/4 teaspoon dried rosemary, and 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning and 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 Tablespoon minced garlic with ground black pepper to taste

Nutrition Analysis

Serving Size: 1/4 recipe	Total Carb: 23.7 g
Calories: 213	Dietary Fiber: 4.1 g
Total Fat: 11.7 g	Sodium: 206 mg
Calories from Fat: 49.7%	Protein: 4.3 g
Saturated Fat: 2.3 g	Calcium: 90.8 mg
Trans Fat: 0.0 g	Iron: 0.95 mg

Source:

Montana State University Extension Service
www.montana.edu/nep/recipes.htm

5 Quick Ways to Microwave Delicious Vegetables

Today's microwave ovens are marvels of engineering, miracles of convenience, and great at preserving the nutrient content of vegetables and other foods. Nutritional value is preserved because microwaving can be done quickly (around 3-10 minutes on HIGH per pound of vegetables) and with minimal amounts of water (a few drops to a few tablespoons). Here are five tips to get perfectly microwaved veggies every time.

1. Prepare the veggies properly.

Start by washing raw vegetables thoroughly and trimming ends or bad spots, just as you would for any type of cooking. For fresh veggies that need to be cut, slice or dice all pieces into a relatively uniform size. Pierce the skins of whole vegetables such as sweet potatoes or whole carrots to allow steam to escape and prevent exploding.

2. Choose cookware carefully.

Except for whole potatoes, vegetables should be covered while microwaving. When using a glass casserole, porcelain dish, or other microwavable safe cookware, use the lid that came with it. If no lid is available, cover with high-quality, microwave-safe wrap and poke one or two small holes in the wrap for steam to escape.

3. Add water sparingly.

Use as little water as possible in cooking, so the nutrients end up in your body rather than in the water. For soft items (peas, green beans, broccoli, etc.) use 1-3 tablespoons water per pound. For more solid ones (carrots, beets, etc.), use slightly more (4-5 tablespoons) per pound. Spinach and other leafy greens only need the water that remains after rinsing.

4. Set cooking times correctly.

Most vegetables are best when cooked on HIGH until tender-crisp. Cooking times per pound will vary from oven to oven: only 3-4 minutes for leafy vegetables; 4-6 minutes for asparagus, broccoli florets, peas, and similar items; 8-10 minutes for whole carrots; and 15 minutes for beets and denser veggies. A single whole sweet potato will take 4-6 minutes.

5. Check tenderness frequently.

For the best possible results, check the vegetables half way through the suggested cooking time. Carefully remove the lid or plastic wrap to avoid burning hands with the escaping steam. Check for tenderness with a fork. To ensure uniform cooking of all vegetables - stir, rearrange, or turn over larger items.

5 Smart Ways to Enjoy Safe Bike Rides

Biking is a fun (and very healthy) way to get to school, work, or somewhere scenic. Wherever you bike, safety should always be at the top of your checklist. Here are five very important items to check before you take a bike out on a street or trail. Some need to be checked once a season; others are important every time you get on a bike.

1. Check the ABCs - air, brakes, and chain.

To ensure a bike is road (or trail) worthy, it needs a complete tune-up at least once a year. Use a reputable bike shop or learn to do-it-yourself at a bike clinic. A quick check of air, brakes, and chain never hurts, especially on older bikes or when you ride on dirty surfaces. Check to see that tires are inflated, brakes are clean, and the chain is free of debris and turning freely.

2. Check the seat height.

When a bike is at the wrong height for your body, it can be uncomfortable and dangerous. To see if the seat is the right height for you, sit on the bike while standing still. Make certain that the tips of your toes (and nothing else) touches the ground on both sides of the bike. At the same time, check to see that the handlebars are also at a comfortable height for you.

3. Check helmet fit.

Wearing a helmet on a bike is just as important as wearing a seat belt in the car. Bike helmets, like seat belt use, are also the law in some places. Unfortunately, many people wear helmets that do not fit well and therefore cannot protect their heads in an accident. To get a proper fit, go to a bike shop, a bike safety clinic, or online to search for written or video instructions.

4. Check shoes and clothing.

Biking in flip-flops, high heels, or soft, dressy shoes is never a smart idea. Wear flat-soled shoes that fit snugly and have no dangling pieces that could become caught in the chain or spokes. Use elastics or ties to hold back long pants or longer skirts. Reflective clothing and backpacks (as well as bike lights) are important accessories, especially when light is low.

5. Check traffic continuously.

Every cyclist has a duty to know the rules of the road, both as they apply to bike riders and as they relate to other drivers as well. It is important to use common sense when riding on any street or trail and to always watch what other two- and four-wheeled vehicles are doing. Many communities have bike rodeos, classes, or clinics to help children learn to ride safely.