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FEBRUARY 2007

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 2nd issue of our 2007 campaign on ***Eating Together, Playing Together***. This month features a focus on the **quality of the meals and activities** that families can enjoy together. The nutrition handout and press release are all about tasty ways to get the **key nutrients** that are usually missing from American meals, while our activity handout outlines **five important aspects of fitness** for all ages.

The vast American nutrient gap comes as no surprise to nutrition communicators. We are clearly an overfed, but undernourished, nation. The **2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans** focused on “shortfall nutrients” to underscore the problem for both children and adults. www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/report/HTML/D1_Tables.htm

Research continues to highlight concerns with other nutrient gaps, as well as the potential interaction among several nutrients. Here are just three recent examples from the health and nutrition literature:

- **Folic Acid Fortification: The Good, The Bad, And The Puzzle Of Vitamin B-12.** Smith AD. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 2007 Jan; 85 (1): 3-5.
- **Population-Level Changes in Folate Intake by Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity after Folic Acid Fortification.** Bentley et al. Am Journal of Public Health 2006 96: 2040-2047.
- **Zinc, Iron, and Lead: Relations to Head Start Children's Cognitive Scores and Teachers' Ratings of Behavior.** Hubbs-Tait et al. Journal of the American Dietetic Association 2007 Jan 107(1): 128-33.

One thing is abundantly clear from both research and dietary guidance. If we want Americans to enjoy both the personal and public health benefits of optimal nutrition, **we must explore more effective ways to help families increase their intake of nutrient-rich foods in meals and snacks everyday**. The **Eat Right Montana** coalition is committed to this effort, in this issue of **Healthy Families 2007**, and in all our work.

Healthy Families packets are made possible with the generous support of agencies, organizations, and individuals. Please join us in thanking the 2007 sponsors listed on the left. If you utilize this information and can make a donation to support positive, practical messages for families, please contact ERM Chair Katie Bark at 406-994-5641 or kbark@mt.gov

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Physical Activity

Five Easy Ways to Enjoy Fitness at All Ages

Full-body fitness develops when you enjoy a variety of activities. By fitting all five aspects of fitness in every week, you'll pump up your energy level and feel great too!

★ Enjoy AEROBIC activities.

These activities get your heart pumping – and make you sweat a little. Walk, run, bike, dance, hike, ski, skate, play ball, swim laps, use an elliptical machine, ride an indoor bike, play a game of golf – they're all good for your body, brain, and stress-level. **Be active for 10 minutes at a time, for a total of 30 minutes daily.**

★ Enjoy STRENGTH activities.

Strong muscles are a huge health benefit for every body, and it's never too late to build them up! Children can strengthen their muscles with everyday play, like climbing and swinging. Adults can lift weights (2 to 10 pounds) – or do lunges and squats. **Aim for some strength building activity 2 to 3 times per week.**

★ Enjoy BALANCE activities.

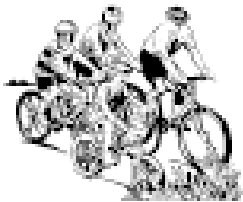
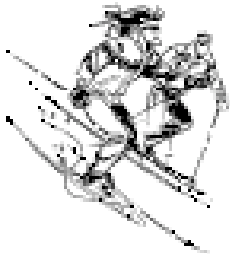
Balance is especially important for younger and older people. Good balance prevents injuries from falling and promotes brain development and function. Dance, tai-chi and biking are all great for balance. **Stand on one leg (hold onto a chair if needed) or walk along a straight line for your daily balancing acts.**

★ Enjoy FLEXIBILITY activities.

Enhancing flexibility helps reduce stress, fatigue, and muscle tension, while improving circulation and mental alertness. Pilates and yoga are excellent ways to increase your flexibility. Gentle, regular stretching can also make a real difference. **Sprinkle 5 to 10 minutes of simple stretches throughout your day.**

★ Enjoy FUN activities.

Fun is an essential aspect of all fitness activities – because, over the long haul, you'll only stick to the ones that you really enjoy. Looking for easy ways to add some fun to your fitness routine? **Add some music. Add friends or family members. Add a dog. Add a bounce to your step. Add a smile to your lips.**



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

a coalition representing health, nutrition and active lifestyles

Healthy Eating

Five Easy Ways to Enjoy Key Nutrients at All Ages

You are probably missing some of the key nutrients you need to look great, feel better, and be stronger. Get the power nutrition your body needs with these tasty foods!

● Enjoy **GRAINS** for fiber, folate and energy.

Go with the grain – **especially 100% whole grains** – at least one serving at every meal. Start off quick and easy with a bowl of whole grain cold cereal (or hot oatmeal) for breakfast. Move onto a satisfying sandwich on whole wheat bread for lunch. Then finish up with brown rice or whole grain pasta at dinnertime.

● Enjoy **PRODUCE** for vitamins A, C and potassium.

Fruits and vegetables – **fresh, frozen, dried and canned in their own juice** – are nature’s most appetizing vitamin “pills.” Get your 5+ per day the easy way: 2 servings at every meal and 1-2 snacks per day. From A to Z, the choices are endlessly delicious – from a sliced apple snack to steamed zucchini for supper.

● Enjoy **MILK PRODUCTS** for calcium and vitamin D.

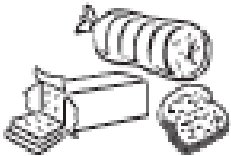
Packed with body-building nutrition, dairy products – **like fat-free or reduced-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese** – are creamy and good for you too. To get the calcium and vit. D (plus protein, potassium, phosphorus and more) you need, all it takes is 3 servings a day – 8 ounces of milk with every meal meets the goal.

● Enjoy **NUTS/SEEDS** for vitamin E and magnesium.

You can get the magnesium and vitamin E that most Americans are missing – with **sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, pecans, cashews, and other nuts**. Just add a serving or two (1 ounce or a small handful each) to your day. Sprinkle nuts on cereal or fruit salad. Enjoy sunflower seeds as a quick snack.

● Enjoy **LEAN RED MEAT** for iron, zinc and protein.

Red meat is a satisfying source of several power nutrients, including several B-vitamins and selenium. A 3-ounce serving of the **29 lean cuts of beef (like top sirloin, brisket, and T-bone)** has less than 200 calories and less than 10 grams of fat, but plenty of ZIP (zinc, iron, protein) and flavor!





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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EATING TOGETHER, PLAYING TOGETHER Celebrating Healthy Families 2007

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Key Nutrients for Every Body – from Cradle to Rocker

Nearly every day, the news features a story about a just discovered connection between nutrition and your health. Vitamin D isn't just for strong bones and teeth. It can improve balance and muscle performance – and may reduce tumor growth in some cancers as well. Folate or (folic acid) helps prevent spinal birth defects – and may also protect against heart disease and mental decline in later years. Magnesium – long known to be involved in energy production – may also help ward off diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

“Unfortunately there are a couple of downsides to all this wonderful nutrition news,” says Lynn Paul, EdD, RD (registered dietitian) and Extension Specialist at Montana State University in Bozeman. “First, like the US population as a whole, many Montana families aren't getting enough of these key nutrients, like vitamin D, folic acid and magnesium.”

The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* called these “shortfall nutrients.” The report noted that American adults do not get enough vitamins A, C, and E, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and fiber. While most children get enough A and C, they have low intakes of vitamin E, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and fiber. More recent surveys have found shortfalls in folate, iron and zinc in some especially vulnerable groups, like young children.

The second concern is that our national tendency to pop vitamin-mineral supplements is probably not the best way to address these nutrient gaps. According to Dr. Paul, nutrition experts favor getting these critical nutrients from food first. “Supplements are fine for a bit of nutrition insurance. However, study after study has confirmed that the real health benefits come when we eat and drink these key nutrients from all the five food groups.”

Getting your nutrients from food – rather than supplements – is better for several reasons. Taste is certainly number one. Enjoying nutrient-rich meals and snacks is more satisfying than taking a pill. Nutrients are also often better absorbed from whole foods, and they come in nutrient “bundles” that work together in the body. Phytonutrients and antioxidants are two more important reasons to choose food over supplements. Since these powerful compounds are still being discovered, you might miss out on them if you are relying on pills or powders for your daily dose of nutrition.

“Fortunately, there are many tasty ways for Montanans of all ages to get their missing nutrients,” says Paul. “Just follow the tips on MyPyramid.gov to enjoy right-sized portions of delicious foods and beverages from all five food groups.”

1. **Grains (especially whole grains)** like whole wheat bread, oatmeal, pasta, and brown rice
2. **Fruits (fresh, dried, frozen, canned)** like apple, banana, kiwi, and canned pineapple in juice
3. **Vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned)** like beets, broccoli, carrots, peas, spinach, and zucchini
4. **Dairy foods (especially fat-free and low fat)** like milk, cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese
5. **Proteins** like nuts, seeds, legumes (dried beans and peas), poultry, fish, and lean red meat