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EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

www.eatrightmontana.org

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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

February 1, 2008

Breakfast Makeover Offers Major Benefits

Taking a few minutes to focus on your morning meal can really make a difference in your day. With the right nutritional kick start, you'll feel better - and think better all day long. Smart breakfast choices also offer some serious long-term health benefits. Recent studies confirm that eating breakfast helps ward off weight gain and prevent heart disease too.

"A smart breakfast is the perfect way to celebrate heart events in February," says Jessica Grennan, State Health Alliances Director for the American Heart Association in Montana. "**American Heart Month** and **National Wear Red Day** (Friday, February 1, www.goredforwomen.org/) are designed to raise awareness of heart disease and stroke risk factors - and simple steps to reduce them. In fact, eating a balanced breakfast is one of the tastiest ways to improve your heart health."

Recent research has confirmed the benefits of breakfast for men, women, and children. A daily bowl of whole grain cereal has been shown to help women maintain a healthy weight and to reduce the risk of heart failure in men. Based on several new studies, eggs may be back on the breakfast menu too! Healthy adults (with no history of diabetes) can enjoy one to two eggs per day without increasing their blood cholesterol or triglyceride levels. People who eat protein, like eggs, for breakfast tend to eat fewer calories during the day and to maintain a healthier weight. They also report feeling more energetic than those who just eat carbohydrates, like a pastry, some toast, or bagel.

Most Americans - 80 to 90% in national surveys - believe that eating breakfast is a healthy habit. "However, only 40 to 50% of adults are actually eating breakfast on a regular basis," says Grennan. "For most of us, time is reported to be the biggest obstacle to eating in the morning. Fortunately, there are lots of really easy ways to beat the breakfast rush hour."

Here are three tried-and-true tips to help you to fit a Montana breakfast into your morning routine:

- **GET ORGANIZED THE NIGHT BEFORE:** Make a family breakfast plan as you clean up from dinner. Set the table with bowls and spoons for cereal. Slice up your favorite fruit and cheese. Get out a pan for pancakes or a blender for smoothies. Prepare the pancake batter or muffin mix, so it is all ready to cook in the morning.
- **KEEP BREAKFAST REAL SIMPLE:** Fancy breakfasts are wonderful when you have time. On busy days, rev up your metabolism with something as quick as a bowl of whole grain cereal with a banana or a slice of leftover pizza. Speaking of leftovers, nothing could be simpler than a sandwich made with a slice of meat from dinner and a piece of cheese.
- **PACK YOUR BREAKFAST TO-GO:** If there's no time to eat at home, take your nutrition-to-go for a 'desk-fast' at work. Save time (and money) by packing both a brown-bag breakfast and lunch the night before. Busy teens can grab a banana, a bag of trail mix, and a carton (or plastic bottle) of milk. Check out the breakfast options available for kids at school too.

"In a recent British study, skipping breakfast for just two weeks led to higher levels of artery-clogging LDL-cholesterol," notes Ms. Grennan. "Be good to your heart, as well as your brain and waistline, and enjoy a smart breakfast every day."

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

www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm

It's All About Balance | Celebrating Healthy Families 2008