

For Immediate Release



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

www.eatrightmontana.org

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Happy, Healthy Days for Montana Mothers

Montana's mothers are busy people with multiple responsibilities for their families, their jobs, and their communities. One of moms' most important roles is as front line health educators for Montana families. Just think of all the important health advice we learn from our mothers: *Hold hands and look both ways when you cross the street. Wash your hands after using the bathroom. Eat some breakfast - it is the most important meal of the day. Drink your milk - you need it for strong bones and teeth.*

"A mother's lifestyle choices are critically important - for her own health and for the health of her whole family," says Kathy Aragon, mother of three daughters, physical therapist, and board member for Billings School District #2. "When women eat smart, play hard, and rest well, they have the energy they need to succeed in all aspects of their lives. When moms make healthy choices for themselves, they also role model healthy lifestyles for their children or grandchildren."

Mother's Day, May 11th, is traditionally a time to honor all that mothers do for us. It is also the first day of the 9th annual National Women's Health Week (May 11-17, 2008), a time for women to make their health a top priority and to take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health (OWH) coordinates the celebration with the slogan - *It's Your Time: Get Inspired. Get Healthy.* The office also provides extensive links to women's health information at www.womenshealth.gov/whw/healthinfo/

According to Aragon, being an inspiring role model for your children is all about simple steps toward a healthy lifestyle. "You don't need to join a fancy gym or sign your kids up for expensive classes. Being a healthy hero for your family can be as simple as walking to the grocery store together to buy a bunch of grapes or some carrots for tasty snacks."

- **Be a role model for eating smart:** Family meals are the perfect place to "walk the talk" of a delicious, nutritious eating style. Show kids you care about your bones by drinking your milk - and improve everyone's health by serving a vegetable or two. Snack smart with lots of nutrient-rich veggies and fruit - great fuel for strong bodies and smart brains.
- **Be a role model for playing hard:** Children do as they see. When they see you being active and having fun, they'll choose an active lifestyle over the boredom of a couch potato. Make fun fitness part of your family's everyday routine. Walk or bike to school with your kids, enjoy the playground after school, and plan a hike or ball game for the weekend.
- **Be a role model for resting well:** Getting enough sleep is essential for busy moms. It helps them be less irritable and better able to cope with the normal stresses of family life. Getting enough sleep helps children be less cranky and helps them succeed in school as well. Getting enough sleep helps both children and adults maintain a healthy weight.

"While positive role models are important for all children, they are especially critical for girls today," notes Ms. Aragon. "The current media models for young women tend to be super skinny and to focus on wacky, restrictive diets. Girls need to see that a healthy weight is about balancing a variety of choices from all the food groups with regular physical activity. They also need to see that beautiful, active, healthy bodies come in many different shapes and sizes - just like moms!"

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