



CONTACT: Crystelle Fogle, MBA, RD 406-947-2344

MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

March 2011

National Nutrition Month 2011®: Tasty Ways to Eat Right with Color

March is National Nutrition Month®, celebrated every year by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) to focus on the importance of nutrition for health, happiness, and overall wellbeing. This year's theme - *Eat Right With Color* - aligns with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans released on January 31, 2011.

"Eat Right With Color is a fun, easy, and positive way to talk with kids about nutrition," says Crystelle Fogle, MBA, MS, RD (Registered Dietitian), with Montana's Cardiovascular Health Program. "We know that eating habits begin early in life, when parents and other adults can model smart food choices for children. Color is one helpful guide to eating a wide variety of nutrient-rich foods every day."

In releasing the new Dietary Guidelines, nutrition experts noted that few American children get the variety of foods they need for optimal growth, development, and performance in school. Just like adults, many children are getting too many calories, but not enough nutrients. Americans are especially deficient in fiber, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium. According to the Dietary Guidelines report, the solution is not taking dietary supplements, but rather an increase in nutrient-rich foods from all the food groups.

"The natural color of food is often a good indicator of nutritional value. In general, deep colors mean that foods have the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that our bodies need for optimal health at any age," notes Fogle. "Here are just a few of the tasty colors that can put delicious nutrition onto your family's plates - and help them maintain healthier weights, as well as a lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer."

- **Green:** Tasty options include spinach, leaf lettuce, asparagus, broccoli, beans, and snap peas. If your kids aren't wild about cooked vegetables, try a tossed salad of baby spinach with apple slices and light dressing.
- **Orange and yellow:** Popular picks include baby carrots, oranges, tangerines, peaches, and pineapple. Get into a simple fruit-for-dessert habit: refreshing slices of fresh orange or canned-in-juice mandarin oranges.
- **Blue and purple:** Beets, grapes, plums, and blueberries are all nutritious selections. Frozen blueberries are well-accepted and versatile. Sprinkle berries on breakfast cereal, fruit salad, or vanilla yogurt for a treat.
- **Red:** While there are lots of red fruits, veggies, and beans, lean red meats - like beef, pork, and lamb - are also important sources of the protein, iron, and zinc that children need to grow and maintain muscle mass.
- **White:** Fat-free/low-fat dairy foods are excellent sources of three missing nutrients (vitamin D, calcium, and potassium). Three servings a day of milk, cheese, or yogurt help kids grow strong bones and teeth.
- **Brown and tan:** Whole grains now come in a range of crunchy, healthy colors. Buy products that list a whole grain as the first ingredient on hot and cold breakfast cereals, breads, rolls, crackers, and pasta.

"As a mom, I'm always looking for practical shopping and cooking tips," adds Fogle. "ADA's new website www.kidseatright.org has great information and recipes for Nutrition Month - and all year round!"

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