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December 2006

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the final 2006 issue of Eat Right Montana's Healthy Families Packet. With this packet, we will wrap-up our annual theme of "Eat Local, Play Local, Live Healthy."

The holiday season is upon us. For those still looking for that "perfect" gift, the "Eat Local" handout provides a list (with links!) to sources of local Montana-made food items and gift packages. Within the play local handout, you'll find tips for keeping holiday stress at bay through physical activity and overall wellness.

The press release discusses a projected food trend for 2007 - an increased interest among consumers of buying local food. Alison Harmon, PhD, Assistant Professor of Food and Nutrition at Montana State University weighs in with an expert viewpoint on many of the reasons behind this growing consumer demand for locally produced food.

In 2007, you can look forward to more terrific installments of the Healthy Families Packets. The theme for 2007 will be Eating and Playing TOGETHER! Many ideas for enjoying delicious, nutritious food and healthy physical activity with family and friends will come to you through these packets throughout the year.

As always, Eat Right Montana thanks the generous donors listed at the left. Through their support, the production of these monthly Healthy Families packets is possible. Eat Right Montana is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of healthful eating and active lifestyles. New members to this organization are always welcome and may contact one of the individuals listed below for membership information.

Your feedback is important to us; please let us know what you think. For a complete archive of past Healthy Families packets, go to: www.montanadieticassociation.org/promo.html

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Physical Activity



Stay Active and Minimize Holiday Stress

Increased spending, visits with extended family and a hectic schedule all contribute to the one unwanted outcome of the holiday season... STRESS! This holiday stress is inevitable for many – so rather than let it take a toll on you, plan for strategies to keep it at bay:

Stay Physically Active

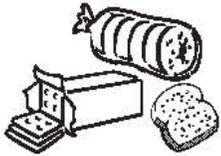
Physical activity, such as walking, is one of the healthiest ways to reduce stress. Try the following:

- When hosting holiday meals, organize a group walk before or after dinner.
- Simply add 10-minute walks, a few times each day, to your routine. Your dog will love you, and you'll feel more relaxed!
- Park in the farthest possible parking space when going to the mall... this will also help avoid the tension associated with find a parking space in a crowded lot!
- Identify a friend to be your stress reduction partner. You can support one another by taking turns being the motivator for walking throughout the holiday season.

Other Stress Reduction Tips for the Holidays

- Eat healthful foods. Minimize the amount of fat and sugar; make a daily goal of five fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid drinking too many caffeinated beverages
- Avoid too much alcohol – excessive alcohol use can result in increased feelings of depression or hopelessness.
- Get enough rest – shoot for 8 hours of sleep each night.
- Don't overspend. Money worries are a major holiday stressor. Make a detailed shopping list with a realistic budget. Pay with cash instead of credit; this helps to eliminate impulse buying.

Healthy Eating



Eating Locally or Giving Gifts of Local Food This Holiday Season

This holiday season, consider giving the gift of a local Montana food item or serving Montana-made food at your holiday meals. A few suggestions include:

- Goat Cheese Products (chevre, ricotta, feta) from Amaltheaia Dairy, Belgrade, MT <http://www.amaltheiadairy.com/>
- Wide Variety of Delicious Bread Products from Wheat Montana, Three Forks, MT. <http://www.wheatmontana.com/>
- Montina™ Gluten-Free Baking Products from Amazing Grains, Ronan, MT. <http://www.amazinggrains.com/>
- Montana Made Elk and Buffalo Meat Sausage... plus a variety of holiday gift packages from Chalet Market, Belgrade, MT. <http://chaletmarket.com/>
- Delicious Legumes of All Kinds from Timeless Natural Food of Conrad, MT. <http://www.timelessfood.com>
- Fresh Herbs from On Thyme Gourmet of Bridger, MT <http://www.onthymegourmet.net/>
- Healthy High-Oleic Safflower Oil from Montola Growers, Inc. of Culbertson, MT. <http://www.montola.com/>
- Organic lamb, beef and goat meat from Brookside Sheep Farm of Dodson, MT. <http://brooksidesh sheepfarm.com>
- Natural Angus beef from Montana Natural Beef, Ronan, MT <http://www.montanaturalbeef.com/>
- Delicious Hot Cereals and Other Montana-Made Food Gifts for the Holidays from Cream of the West, Harlowton, MT <http://www.creamofthewest.com/>
- Mission Mountain Market Food Enterprise Center, Ronan, MT – your source for creative baskets and gifts of Montana made food products. <http://www.mtmountainmarket.org/catalog/>

For a more complete list of Montana-made food products, please go to:

The AERO Montana Website and order a copy of their publication, Abundant Montana: AERO's Directory to Sustainably Grown Montana Food <http://www.aeromt.org>

Montana Department of Agriculture's Food and Beverage Directory <http://www.agr.state.mt.us/business/foodbev/FBindex.asp>



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

EAT LOCAL, PLAY LOCAL, LIVE HEALTHY
Celebrating Healthy Families 2006

Eat Local Among Food Trends for the New Year

Projected food trends for 2007 include an increased consumer demand for locally produced foods. Consumers cite many factors including freshness, taste, nutrition and environmental concerns when discussing their buy local preference.

"The evidence is clear," states Alison Harmon, PhD, Assistant Professor of Food and Nutrition at Montana State University. "If we look at the growing number of farmers' markets, food cooperatives and community supported agriculture programs, it becomes very apparent that the interest and demand for local sourcing of food is on the rise."

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there was an 80% increase in the number of farmers' markets nationwide between 1994 and 2002. What is driving this eat local trend?

"There are several factors that are key drivers of this movement toward local food consumption," continues Harmon. "Certainly, freshness and taste is one of the most often cited reasons. Think about eating a tomato right off of the vine compared to one that was picked green, crated up weeks ago and shipped thousands of miles. There is a big difference."

"However, issues such as wanting to know how your food is produced and how it was handled are also very important to people – especially in light of recent food safety scares associated with big food production facilities."

'Food Miles' is a recently coined term that turns up whenever the topic turns to local food. Basically, 'food miles' is the distance food travels from production to consumption. People looking to buy locally want a low 'food miles' number attached to their food.

"The fewer your food miles, the more regionally or locally you are sourcing your food. People are becoming more aware of and sensitive to energy use. With increased fuel prices, conservation of energy is on the minds of many people and where and how we buy our food impacts this," explains Harmon.

When asked if there is anything else at the core of the movement toward local food consumption, Harmon doesn't hesitate. "I think buying locally is an attempt to reconnect with a lost sense of community for many people. With technology, long commutes and just the hectic pace of living in many places, people are longing for a sense of community. Buying locally grown food helps to fill this void – it provides a connection to the food producers, the land and to others, in the community, who have similar values. Local food feels more like home."