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December 2007

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 12th issue of our 2007 campaign on ***Eating Together, Playing Together***. The final issue of this theme focuses on eating and playing together during the holidays. Our nutrition handout discusses **easy ways to add nutrient-rich foods**, while the fitness handout covers **fun ways to enjoy holiday fitness – 10 minutes at a time**.

As author of this year's packets and a huge fan of ***Eating Together, Playing Together***, I am delighted to tell you about another project that I have recently completed for National Cattlemen's Beef Association. The ***Enriching Family Mealtimes Tool Kit*** (available for free download from www.family-mealtimes.org/) includes a complete Leader's Guide, 20 colorful tip sheets, 8 brand-new, kid-friendly recipes, and 4 PowerPoint presentations with detailed scripts. The materials incorporate the latest research on the importance of family meals and were carefully reviewed by four national content experts. To order a hard copy of the kit with all the resources on a CD, click the "**Contact Us**" link on the website page.

While the holiday season adds stress to the lives of many families, there is no doubt that we can reduce the stress on ourselves by making some simple lifestyles choices. I often remind myself of these possibilities with a Swedish proverb that I have on a wall hanging. With my best wishes for delicious and active holidays, here is the proverb (with a few of my own additions in **green**). *Dayle Hayes*– EatWellatSchool@gmail.com

***Fear less, hope more
Eat less, chew more
Sit less, move more
Worry less, sleep more
Rush less, play more
Whine less, breathe more
Talk less, say more
Hate less, love more
... And all good things are yours***

Healthy Families packets are made possible with generous support from agencies, organizations, and individuals. Please join us in thanking the 2007 sponsors listed on the left. If you use this packet 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

5 Ways to Enjoy 10 Minutes of Holiday Fitness Fun

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Physical activity is even more important during the holidays than other times of the year. Being active helps relieve holiday stress – and helps balance out the usual increase in holiday calories. To maintain fitness levels and emotional wellbeing, enjoy at least three 10-minute activity breaks a day – preferably with family or friends.

★ Take a brisk 10-minute stroll with a loved one.

Something as simple as a 10-minute walk can make all the difference in your physical and mental state. A brisk walk around the block at work or around your neighborhood can improve your mood and kick-start your metabolism in just a few simple steps. For extra holiday fun, invite someone you've been missing!

★ Play a child's favorite active game for 10 minutes.

It's often said that holidays are "all about the children." What better way to be active than to have festive fun with one or more young people! Children often have extra energy to burn during the holidays and even serious adults can enjoy some sledding, get tied up in game of Twister®, or toss around a Koosh® ball.

★ Dance for 10 minutes to your favorite holiday tunes.

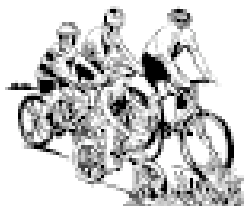
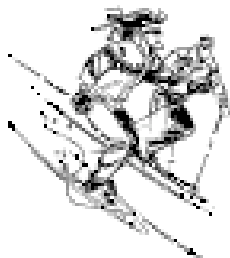
You could "*Rock around the Christmas Tree*" and just go "*Walkin' in a Winter Wonderland*." Use music to pick up the pace when you are walking or working outside with headphones – or cleaning up the house for a holiday gathering. For the best holiday break of all, take a spin on the dance floor with your sweetie.

★ Walk for 10 minutes between stores.

You can even fit fitness into a busy shopping day. Take a 10-minute 'breather' between each store on your list. Enjoy a quick lap around the perimeter of the mall or a walk around a couple of downtown blocks. You'll have more energy -- and you just might make more reasonable spending decisions too!

★ Take a 10-minute stretch break at home or work.

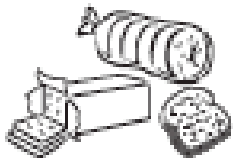
Holiday tension can take a toll on backs, shoulders, and jaws. A quick break can relieve physical and mental stress. Check these sites for gentle moves that can be done anywhere you need a stretch: www.lib.msu.edu/ergomsu/stretch.htm and www.will-harris.com/yoga/everyday_yoga.html



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

5 Easy Ways to Enjoy More Tasty Holiday Nutrition

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Although calorie-rich treats and overflowing tables can be the norm during holidays, you can get the nutrition that your body needs. The key is to concentrate on nutrient-rich foods. With bright colors and delicious flavors, nutrient-rich foods are a gift on any holiday table.

Calorie for calorie, these stars of the nutrition world offer more of the vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber that your whole family needs to maintain weight, enhance health, and reduce stress during this hectic time of year. Here are five easy ways to add nutrient-rich foods to all your seasonal feasts and treats.

★ **Start every day (and holiday) with breakfast.**

For a high-energy day, always include protein in your morning meal. Enjoy an egg or two, a serving of low-fat yogurt, a handful of nuts on whole grain cereal, or some lean meat, like a sliced turkey and Swiss on whole wheat wrap or bread.

★ **Snack smart throughout the holidays.**

Nutrient-rich snacks provide energy, while reducing the tendency to overeat at your next meal. Start with a piece of fresh fruit or some sliced veggies. Add a serving of protein, like a string cheese, a glass of low-fat milk, or leftover meats.

★ **Feature festive holiday salads at every meal.**

Fruit salads (any combo of canned, dried, frozen, or fresh fruit) are delicious any time of day. Green salads, bean salads, and veggie salads add color and crunch to lunch and dinner (and they make tasty leftovers for super smart snack times).

★ **Pack your holiday breadbasket with nutrition.**

The nutrient-rich goodness of whole grains, nuts, seeds, and dried fruits makes for tasty breads, rolls, and muffins. Bake some at home or check grocery shelves for sunflower whole wheat bread or bran muffins with raisins and walnuts.

★ **Warm up the holiday with winter vegetables.**

Root veggies (sweet potatoes, beets, and carrots) and hard winter squashes, like acorn, butternut, pumpkin, and spaghetti, are some the least expensive and most nutritious produce options. Enjoy them roasted, mashed, and made into soup!



EAT RIGHT MONTANA



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

EATING TOGETHER, PLAYING TOGETHER
Celebrating Healthy Families 2007

December 1, 2007

Real Easy Ways to Reduce Holiday Stress

For many Montana families, the holiday season can feel more stressful than joyful. Stress comes from many directions at this time of year: too much rich food and drink, not enough exercise or sleep, and all the rushing around to find the perfect gifts at the lowest prices.

“Although stress is common at this time of year, it is not inevitable,” says Crystelle Fogle, RD (registered dietitian) with the Montana Cardiovascular Health Program. “Virtually every mental health expert agrees that lifestyle habits can help with stress reduction. This is the perfect time to step back from the holiday hustle and find ways to insure that your family is getting daily physical activity, plenty of nutrient-rich foods, and enough sleep every night.”

The typical holiday pattern of overindulgence and sleep deprivation combined with low activity actually adds stress in multiple layers. First, there is the actual physical stress from your body not getting what it needs for optimal health and energy. On top of that stress are layered the guilt and frustration of doing things that you know aren't so good for you. Then, these feelings often lead back to more overeating or additional alcohol consumption.

Fogle points out that stopping this vicious cycle is easier than you may think. “It starts with setting priorities for your family – like fitness, nutrition, and sleep – and then saying ‘no’ to some of the holiday events that interfere with these healthy habits. The simple act of taking more control over your daily life can lower stress levels almost immediately.”

Here are a few real easy ways to have your holiday fun and reduce your stress too:

- **Eat well:** Family meals and nutrient-rich foods are even more important at this time of year. Enjoy simple meals, like steaming soup with salad and rolls, together as often as possible. Take time to establish new family traditions, like making bread from scratch.
- **Play well:** Being active together creates special memories and improves moods at the same time. Holiday fitness fun is as easy as a family game of Twister® or a stroll around the neighborhood (perhaps to sing some holiday songs or carols for friends).
- **Sleep well:** Most adults do best with 7 to 8 hours sleep a night, while young children need significantly more. Develop family routines that promote healthy sleep habits, like reading holiday stories or listening to calming music together before bedtime.

“The ‘togetherness’ of these stress reduction tips is an important aspect of healthy, happy holidays,” notes Ms. Fogle. Connections to family and friends are much more important to holiday comfort and joy than lots of new stuff or plates of high-calorie treats. Starting new family traditions that reduce stress – like cooking a meal together or playing active games together – are gifts that will truly keep on giving for years to come.

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