



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

[www.eatrightmontana.org](http://www.eatrightmontana.org)

March 2009

Dear Colleagues,

**Happy National Nutrition Month and welcome to the third issue of Eat Right Montana's 2009 campaign: *Going Green: Simple Steps for Montana Families*.** This packet is focused on starting healthy steps at the very youngest ages, in preschool children. By feeding young children's natural appetite for learning, we can instill healthy habits - **nutrient-rich meals and snacks, fun active lifestyles, and green waste management** - for a lifetime.

One of the Ad Council's memorable recent campaigns, **Early Childhood Development**, is focused on the everyday opportunities for parents, grandparents, and caregivers to support learning and insure future success. You can read, watch, and listen to the PSAs (many from the grocery store) at [www.adcouncil.org/default.aspx?id=32](http://www.adcouncil.org/default.aspx?id=32). The campaign web site offers hundreds more tips, including many that are health-related at [www.bornlearning.org/](http://www.bornlearning.org/). In English and Spanish, **Born Learning** provides background research and practical advice to help all adults "*explore ways to turn everyday moments into fun learning opportunities.*"

The positive resources in this month's packet feature simple tips for families and caregivers of young children. We hope that you find many uses for these practical handouts:

- **Media Release - *Helping Children Learn to Care About Their Environment***
- **Healthful Eating - *Easy Ways to Make Grocery Shopping with Kids Fun (and Green)***
- **March Recipe - *Oatmeal Pear Breakfast Casserole*** (with Montana wheat and oats)
- **Active Lifestyles - *Fun Ways to Get Kids Moving Without Spending a Fortune***
- **Eco-Tips - *Smart Ways to Reuse, Declutter, and Simplify Your Life***

Today's economics are helping all Americans rediscover the virtues of frugality - making the reuse of trash cool in our newly "secondhand nation." With this in mind, I had to share this amazingly creative list of things to do with your old yoga mat besides throwing it out (<http://life.gaiam.com/gaiam/p/50WaystoReuseYourYogaFitnessMatBestidea.htm>).

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Although we have an outline for each packet, we are eager to incorporate your input whenever possible. Just send your thoughts along to me at [EatRightMT2000@gmail.com](mailto:EatRightMT2000@gmail.com) - and remember, past issues of **Healthy Families** and other ERM materials are available at [www.eatrightmontana.org/](http://www.eatrightmontana.org/).

*Dayle Hayes, MS, RD*

**Healthy Families** packets are made possible with the generous support of agencies, organizations, and individuals - like the wonderful 2008 sponsors listed on the right. Please help ERM continue our tradition of positive, practical health information by becoming one of our 2009 sponsors or with a supporting subscription of \$50 per year. To discuss sponsorship, please contact ERM Chair Katie Bark at [kbark@mt.gov](mailto:kbark@mt.gov)

## SPONSORS

American Heart Association

Montana Association of School Superintendents

Montana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services: Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, Nutrition and Physical Activity Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program

Montana Dietetic Association

MSU Extension: Food and Nutrition and Nutrition Education Programs

Montana Office of Public Instruction: School Nutrition Programs

Rocky Mountain Development Council

Western Dairy Association

Crystelle Fogle 406-947-2344 | Katie Bark 406-994-5641 | Mary Ann Harris 406-994-5397

**Going Green: Simple Steps for Healthy Families 2009**

# For Immediate Release



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

[www.eatrightmontana.org](http://www.eatrightmontana.org)

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

**MT Department of Public Health & Human Services**

March 1, 2009

## Helping Children Learn to Care About Their Environment

We all know that it can be difficult, although not impossible, to teach an old dog new ways. It is much easier to start out with healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle than it is to transform a confirmed couch potato into a picture of fitness. Healthy habits begin very early in life. Parents, grandparents, and other caregivers have many opportunities to help young children get a head start by learning to make healthy choices for themselves and healthy choices for the planet too.

"In our own family and our child care facility, we incorporate personal and environmental health into the rhythm of every day," says Sonnie Atwood, mother of two and co-owner of Organic Sprouts Home Day Care in Missoula. "We use children's natural curiosity and innate creativity to build a foundation for a lifetime of healthy choices. The vocabulary of smart environmental choices, like reuse, recycle, and compost, can become everyday words for young children."

Ms. Atwood shared her creative approach to reusing items (previously considered trash) with child care providers in a *Making Something Out of Nothing* workshop, offered this winter by Child Care Resources in Missoula. Perfect for today's tight economy, the class showed providers and parents how to reuse ordinary household materials for preschool games, sensory activities, crafts projects, and individual artistic expression - all building a foundation for success in school.

According to Sonnie Atwood, almost anything can be reused for arts and crafts projects. "We often send wish lists home with the children. Some of our perennial favorites are magazines, maps, paper towel rolls, juice cans, and paint sample cards. Egg cartons are incredible. With a child's imagination, some paint, and a little glue, they can become all kinds of critters (spiders and bugs are always popular), boats, helicopters, or trucks. With scissors and adult assistance, a plastic apple juice jug can be transformed into a hat, a horn to play, or a fun way to catch a ball, much like the game of jai alai."

Here are some simple steps to start going green with any young children in your family or circle of friends:

- **Be a role model for smart environmental choices:** Kids always pay attention to what adults are doing, especially the important adults in their lives. Carry water - for them and for yourself - in a reusable metal or safe plastic water bottle.
- **Introduce a green vocabulary:** Reduce, reuse, and recycle are words that kids can learn and learn to do. The new series of Little Green Books™ (visit your local library for reusable books) is a fun way to read about environmental adventures.
- **Think outside the box about boxes:** Let children be your green guides when thinking about how to reuse boxes before recycling them. Maybe the box can become a building block, a train car, a robot head, an animal mask, or even a guitar?

"In addition to our daily routines, like composting kitchen and table waste, we make environmental choices into games for children," notes Ms. Atwood. "When we are done with some packaging material, we let the children help us decide how to reuse or recycle it. Sorting items for recycling into the proper bin is actually one of their favorite activities! And, as the days get longer and the soil warms, we are all looking forward to lots of gardening fun in the yard."

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

[www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrightthehealthyfamilies.htm](http://www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrightthehealthyfamilies.htm)

**Going Green: Simple Steps for Healthy Families 2009**

## 5 Easy Ways to

## Make Grocery Shopping with Kids Fun (and Green)

Savvy parents of young children know that any errand can become an educational and entertaining experience. You just have to know how to start the conversation! Grocery stores are especially wonderful places to explore and learn about food and going green. Need hints about teachable moments? Visit [www.bornlearning.org/](http://www.bornlearning.org/).

### 1. Pick a smart time to shop.

The worst time to grocery shop is often painfully obvious - when a child (or adult) is hungry and the store is crowded. If this is your only option, buy a bag of baby carrots or a cheese stick to snack on - and get in-and-out as quickly as possible. If you have a choice, shop when everyone is well-rested and well-fed. Use a shopping list as your guide and stick to the departments with the nutrient-rich foods you want to purchase. Steer clear of the all-too-tempting cereal and snack aisles. *Now we're going shopping in the grocery store. What do we buy in this store? That's right, yummy for your dinner!*

### 2. Remember the reusable bags.

Reusing grocery bags - big (canvas, mesh, or cloth) and small (plastic for produce) - is one of the simplest, most effective ways to go green while shopping. Many people have bags, but forget to bring them into the store. Here's a sure-fire way to make reusable bags part of every shopping trip: Get the kids involved! Keep a big bag of reusable bags in the car - right next to your child's car seat. Ask your child(ren) to remember the bags every time you go into a grocery or other store. *What do we need to take into the store with us? That's right, all the blue bags so we can put our food into them!*

### 3. Explore colors, shapes, numbers, and letters.

Every grocery store is filled with thousands of opportunities to help children learn age-appropriate skills. As you walk in the door, pick something that your child has been learning and focus on those items throughout the store, such as red items or circle shapes. With preschool and older children, you can take this discovery game a step further: At home, find a food picture in a book or cut one out of a magazine. Take the book or picture with you and try to find the item in the store. *Where do you think the broccoli might be in this store? That's right, it's here - next to other green veggies, like peppers.*

### 4. Put nutrition into their hands.

Every trip through the grocery store can be a nutrition lesson. For example, children can learn to put food into different categories: meats, grains, fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods. Grocery shopping can also be a chance for children to choose new foods that they want to try - like picking out a new fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit each trip. Again, as children get older, they can help plan the menu at home and then pick out the foods to match the menu items at the grocery store. *OK, tonight we are having tacos. Where should we look for the hamburger? That's right, in the meat department!*

### 5. Talk about where food comes from.

Children often do not understand where food comes from - before it appears on supermarket shelves or restaurant menus. Adults can help them learn how and where food grows by reading about it at home and discussing it at the store. Even better, make the connection directly by shopping at farmer's markets or visiting greenhouses, dairies, or ranches. Supporting local farmers and ranchers makes good sense for your family's nutrition and for the local economy. *Look at the different cheeses. Where we do get cheese? That's right, cheese is made from milk - from cows, goats, or sheep.*



## Oatmeal Pear Breakfast Casserole

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1/3 cup all purpose flour or oat flour
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup butter measured and placed in freezer for at least 15 minutes
- 6 fresh pears, peeled and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup pecan halves
- Non-fat vanilla yogurt

### Instructions:

1. Combine the oats, flour, 1/3 cup brown sugar, and cinnamon.
2. With a pastry blender or two forks, cut in the cold butter until the mixture is well blended and resembles soft crumbs.
3. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
4. Combine the fresh pear chunks, raisins, and the other 1/4 cup brown sugar in a 13 X 9 inch oiled or sprayed baking dish.
5. Top mixture with pecan halves. Evenly sprinkle the oat mixture over the top.
6. Bake for 30 minutes or until bubbly and pears are tender.
7. Spoon into small bowls and top with 3 or more tablespoons yogurt.

### YIELD: 10 1/2-cup servings

For smaller families or groups, divide ingredients in half and use a smaller baking dish.

### Ideas/Substitutions

- Make it hot and toasty for breakfast; then serve leftovers for dessert. Or make it for a yummy dessert and have the planned-overs for the next morning's breakfast.
- Use local products whenever possible, such as Montana-grown wheat flour, oats, and maybe even fruit (in season or dried).
- Substitute local apples, berries, cherries, or peaches for pears.
- Substitute other dried fruit for raisins. Tart dried cherries or dried cranberries (craisins) would be especially tasty.
- To reduce saturated fat, substitute margarine for butter.

### Nutrition Analysis

Serving Size: 1/2 cup

Calories: 294

Total Fat: 10 g

Calories from Fat: 32%

Saturated Fat: 3.6 g

Trans Fat: 0.0 g

Total Carb: 49 g

Dietary Fiber: 6.2 g

Sodium: 47 mg

Protein: 4.9 g

Calcium: 53 mg

Iron: 1.5 mg

### Recipe Source

Adapted and used with permission of

**Colleen S. Bucher, RD, CDN**

Registered Dietitian specializing in Bariatric Surgery and Adult Weight Management



## 5 Fun Ways to Get Kids Moving Without Spending a Fortune

These active lifestyle tips for families combine green principles with frugality: saving money, getting strong, and reducing waste - all at the same time. They are guaranteed to get kids moving and having fun, while leaving the family budget intact. While dance classes and sports teams can be great activities, they can also be expensive and time-consuming for today's overscheduled kids. Pediatric experts recommend that children get a healthy dose of 'free' playtime where they can actively socialize with their friends (with age-appropriate supervision, of course).

### 1. RE-schedule your family calendar.

Start with a simple check of your daily and weekly calendars (along with your current budget). Does your schedule feel too tightly packed and all stressed out? Are you spending enough quality time together as a family - with opportunities to eat dinner and play together? Are you driving around too much and not getting enough physical activity? Do you need to cut down on unnecessary expenses (a little or a lot)? How could you give your kids more of the attention they crave?

### 2. RE-think screen time in your home.

Entertainment screens (TV/DVD/computer/video game/PDA) use lots of electricity (TVs alone use 3% of household energy). Turning off screens saves energy dollars and helps kids be healthier, smarter, and better behaved. Pediatricians recommend no screen-time for children under 2 and less than 2 hours a day for older kids. Turning off screens gives your family time for active fun and togetherness: playing ball (any ball outside, Nerf® balls inside) or dancing to silly music.

### 3. RE-imagine toys for tots.

Small children like to play with almost anything. In fact, often old stuff is better than fancy new toys. Reusing kitchen containers (cereal boxes, margarine tubs, plastic bottles, etc.) gives toddlers hours of no-cost entertainment and minimizes the trash in your landfill too. (These 'toys' can be recycled when they're no longer wanted.) Fill empty containers with crumbled newspaper for stacking or with dried beans for making music. Tape the lids on tight and let the fun begin!

### 4. RE-define transportation to school.

This idea is real easy on the pocketbook and environment - and real good for children's health. For strong bodies, smart brains, and best behavior, children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Walking or biking to school saves money, reduces pollution, and gets kids the movement they need. Walk or bike with your kids - and you won't need to buy an expensive treadmill! Make smart use of walk-to-school time by practicing spelling words or learning new songs.

### 5. RE-discover the joy of family time.

It's been said that a family that plays together, stays together. Children get more than a healthy body from family play time. They enjoy security and stability - and they learn lifelong values, like hard work, fair play, and giving everyone a turn. All this - and a ton of fun too! Need some sports equipment or bikes for your family activities? No need to pay brand new prices: Check out garage sales, thrift stores (Goodwill®, etc.), and sports equipment swaps for gently-used items.

## 5 Smart Ways to Reuse, Unclutter, and Simplify Your Life

If we want a healthy environment for our families and our earth, we must learn smart waste management skills. The second most efficient way to manage waste (after REDUCING) is to REUSE items for as long as possible before discarding them. As the economy has gotten tougher, reusing - in all its various forms - has become cool again. All those things that our parents and grandparents did to save money are suddenly a sassier shade of green. No need to feel bad about not having the latest, greatest stuff! Save money, save the environment, and be cool - REUSE!

### 1. RE-think before you toss it.

As you stand over the trash with an unwanted item, think: Is there any way to reuse or repair this so that it can be useful to our family? If it really has completely outlived its usefulness for us, is there anyone else who might be able to use it for a while longer? If you have trouble being creative with your trash, no worries! There are tons of innovative ideas online, like on Purdue University's searchable *Use It Again* site at [www.purdue.edu/envirosoft/housewaste/src/reuse2.htm](http://www.purdue.edu/envirosoft/housewaste/src/reuse2.htm).

### 2. RE-use it to organize your stuff.

Clutter is a not-so-pretty problem in many homes. Reusing containers to organize your stuff is a WIN-WIN plan. You win as your house slowly gets uncluttered - and the environment wins because you throw less stuff into landfills. While we all secretly long for those perfectly organized closet and drawer inserts, many reused items work just as well: large plastic salad boxes for shoes; egg cartons for earrings or buttons; and jars for nuts, bolts, screws, and other workbench stuff.

### 3. RE-invent it for a totally new purpose.

Let your creativity go wild and encourage your kids to help (they are often better at re-imagining than adults). Low on creative juices? No problem, do an online search! For example, here are four fun ways to reuse kitchen boxes: (1) Make a pretend store for children to play shopping; (2) Create blocks (stuff with newspaper and tape closed); (3) Turn them into musical instruments (filled with dried beans or with rubber band strings); and (4) Glue them together to make robots.

### 4. RE-pair it for a longer life.

Before you throw something out, think about fixing it up (or giving it to someone who can). Some fixes are simple - a few minutes with a glue gun or a needle and thread can make many things like new again. Minor repairs that require expert help - such as resoling shoes - are usually well-worth the minimal expense. For major, more expensive repairs (appliances, furniture, etc.), do some online research and talk to a local shop to see if the investment is worth your while.

### 5. RE-gift it to someone who can use it.

There are dozens of wonderful ways to donate items that you no longer use. Charities are the obvious place to start - both for resale items and donations to be used in their day-to-day operations. School and community groups may take things that others refuse, such as electronics, to be safely disassembled for educational purposes. Now, even plain regifting (passing along a new, unwanted gift) has taken on a 'green' sheen - with several web sites, a national day of celebration (the Thursday before Christmas), and rules of etiquette. Actually, a white elephant party can be great fun any time of year.