



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

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

December 2009

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the final issue of Eat Right Montana's campaign: *Going Green: Simple Steps for Montana Families*. Our December packet is all about gifts of the season. On the next five pages, you'll find easy tips for **simple gifts of health and wellness, kitchen gifts for eating well, gifts of fun and fitness, and green gifts for a healthy planet**. All of our gift ideas are inexpensive - from nothing to about \$25.

For lots of creatively, cheap holiday cheer, check out our features:

**Media Release:**

*Simple Gifts of Food and Nutrition*

**Healthful Eating:**

*Inexpensive Ways to Give the Gift of Eating Well*

**December Recipe:**

*Friendship Soup Jar*

**Active Lifestyles:**

*Inexpensive Ways to Give Gifts of Fun and Fitness*

**Eco-Tips:**

*Inexpensive Ways to Give Green Gifts for a Healthy Planet*

We are delighted to announce the theme for Healthy Families 2010: *Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics with Food & Fitness*. We will continue to focus on positive realistic ways to achieve better health in small steps, with a special new feature on cooking skills!

We welcome comments and suggestions. Wherever possible, we want to incorporate your ideas and input into our monthly packets. Just send your thoughts to me at [EatRightMT2000@gmail.com](mailto:EatRightMT2000@gmail.com) - and remember, past issues of **Healthy Families** and other ERM materials are available on the ERM web site 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 2009 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)

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

# For Immediate Release



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

December 1, 2009

## Simple Gifts of Food and Nutrition: Good for the Body, Easy on the Budget

Even during the best of times, holiday gift giving can get complicated. Who should be on your gift list? How much should you spend on each person? What about charitable giving? How much should you give and to what groups? When the times are tough and the economy uncertain, all of these questions can become overwhelming, especially if your own budget has taken a hit in the downturn.

“Holidays are a time for generosity and there are many ways to give even when our budgets are tight,” says Dayle Hayes, MS, RD (Registered Dietitian), and President, Nutrition for the Future, Inc. in Billings. “Nourishing gifts of foods are always welcome. They help shift the focus from the typical holiday overeating to sharing with those who may not be eating well. If you want to make a generous donation of food and nutrition this year, there are ideas to fit every wish list and every pocketbook.”

The most direct way to make a nutrition donation is to invite someone to share food with you – in your home, in their home, or at a restaurant. Consider an invitation to a neighbor or to someone from church. Be especially generous to those who may have limited income, mobility, or social contacts. If you don't have extra money to spend, offer to take someone shopping or to prepare a meal for them.

According to Hayes, there are several simple ways to give generously on a limited budget. “As you consider how best to give individuals on your list and to charities in your community, remember that gifts from the heart are more powerful than fancy packages and large checks.”

- **Give things you make:** If you're a crafty person, you've got plenty of ideas for inexpensive gifts. Not crafty? No worries! Bake a loaf of whole grain bread or make friendship soup in a jar. Not a cook? Burn a CD of your favorite holiday music and listen while you cook a meal with friends or family.
- **Give your time:** In our busy world, time is a truly generous gift. Not able to make a usual financial contribution to your food bank or soup kitchen this year? Donate time throughout the year. These organizations may have lots of volunteers over the holidays but need help on a regular basis.
- **Give your compassion:** There is no more powerful gift than compassion, something which money can't buy. Share holiday companionship with those who may need a smile, some help with eating, or a conversation. Ask how to help your local hospice, children's hospital, or nursing home at mealtime.
- **Give your expertise:** All of us have special skills. For organizations that feed the hungry, your skills may fill a serious need. If you're not in a position to donate money, consider giving your expertise in planning meals, cooking, or finding simple, delicious recipes that use donated food.

“A sense of community is one of the strongest ways to celebrate the special meaning of the holidays in our lives,” says Dayle Hayes. “By joining with others around a table and enjoying a meal together, we can all take comfort from the blessings of nourishing food and simple companionship.”

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

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

## 5 Inexpensive Ways to Give the Gift of Eating Well

Kitchen gifts are always in style, especially for college students, young marrieds, and any of the foodies on your list. Brightly colored kitchen gifts are also fun for children and teens - as a way to get them into the cooking habit. All of these gift ideas can be done for under \$25 - and many cost much less!

### 1. Stocking stuffers - super helpful for \$5 to \$15

Small gadgets can make a big difference in someone's cooking abilities - for very little dough. A pair of strong kitchen shears (to trim skin off chicken, cut up fresh herbs, etc.) makes a very sharp gift. Some other fun ideas: adjustable measuring spoons, vegetable peeler, zester (for lemons, oranges, etc.), and bamboo or silicon spoons and spatulas.

### 2. Steamers - from bamboo to stainless

Talk about healthy and versatile, steamers are the original multipurpose kitchenware. They come in every variety - from simple metal and colorful silicon baskets to multi-level stainless steel and counter top electric types. Steamers cook veggies quickly and tender crisp, making them so much more appealing than overcooked and mushy!

### 3. Simple equipment - versatile and smart

The under \$25 options are nearly endless. You can personalize any of them by making a food item that uses the equipment and making the food and the recipe part of your gift. Consider these possibilities: non-slip mixing bowls with lids (plus a 3-bean salad recipe), a bread pan (with a fresh loaf and recipe), or a fully-loaded casserole dish.

### 4. Recipes and ingredients - with health in mind

Have a favorite recipe or maybe one that always gets compliments? Give it to friends for a holiday treat. Buy the ingredients and gift them in a reusable shopping bag with the recipe tied to the handle. Or make up a batch and gift the food with the recipe. It's a win-win, because, either way, you'll make a seriously delicious holiday impression!

### 5. Custom nutrition baskets - for every taste

Create a gift basket that matches foods to a theme. For example, use Montana-grown gourmet grains and beans in a basket with red lentils, black chickpeas, purple barley, spelt, and kamut, along with recipes for each. Need a source for unusual or heirloom products? Check out your local food coop or Timeless Seeds at [www.timelessfood.com/](http://www.timelessfood.com/).



## Friendship Soup Jar

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup dried green split peas
- 1/3 cup beef bouillon granules (reduced sodium)
- 1/4 cup medium pearl barley
- 1/2 cup dried lentils
- 1/4 cup dried minced onion
- 1/2 cup uncooked long grain brown rice
- 1/2 cup uncooked alphabet pasta or other small pasta
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning

### Directions for gift jars:

- 1) In a 1 1/2 pint jar (new or reused), layer the first seven ingredients in the order listed. Use Montana-grown products where available.
- 2) Wrap pasta in a small sheet of plastic wrap and add to jar.
- 3) Seal tightly.
- 4) Decorate jar with stickers, ribbon, or gift paper.
- 5) Write or type recipe instructions onto a holiday card or paper. Attach to jar.
- 6) Store in a cool, dry place for up to 3 months.

### RECIPE INSTRUCTIONS:

#### Additional Ingredients:

- 1 pound lean ground beef or wild game
- 3 quarts water
- 1 can (28 oz) diced tomatoes, undrained

#### To Prepare Soup:

- 1) Remove pasta from jar and set aside.
- 2) In a Dutch oven over medium heat, cook the beef until no longer pink; drain fat.
- 3) Add the water, tomatoes, and soup mix; bring to a boil.
- 4) Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 45 minutes.
- 5) Stir in the reserved pasta; cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes or until the pasta, peas, barley, rice, and lentils are tender.

### Nutrition Analysis:

Serving Size: 1 cup

Calories: 165

Total Fat: 4.0 g

Calories from Fat: 24 %

Saturated Fat: 0.0 g

Trans Fat: 0.0 g

Total Carb: 21 g

Dietary Fiber: 4.8 g

Sodium: 106 mg

Protein: 12 g

Calcium: 49 mg

Iron: 2.6 mg

#### Recipe Source

Recipe provided courtesy of Taste of Home magazine. Find more great recipes at [www.tasteofhome.com](http://www.tasteofhome.com)

## 5 Inexpensive Ways to Give Gifts of Fun and Fitness

There are tons of possible fitness gifts and many of them fall into the \$25 and under category. These include yoga mats, resistance bands, small weights, and fitness DVDs. Some of the best gifts actually cost little or nothing - except your time and friendship. Think about those on your gift list who might really benefit from some fun TLC!

### **1. Give a gift of companionship.**

How about combining a gift of time with fitness? This can be as simple and inexpensive (or as complicated and pricey) as you want. Choose a 2-for-1 monthly deal at a fitness center or gym and share it with a friend. Gift an entry fee for a walk or run and train with them. Give someone a certificate for a weekly walk, an evening of yoga, or a weekend of biking.

### **2. Give a gift of instruction.**

If you are good at a specific physical activity, you can take your gift to the next level by helping someone improve their skills. Give the gift of a few lessons on dancing, skiing, skating, tennis, golf, racquetball, basketball, baseball, or whatever activity you would love to share with someone you love. A gift of instruction is a special treasure for children.

### **3. Give a gift of memories.**

Digital cameras have made it easy to share photo and video memories. Extend the gift of a hike or a canoe trip by creating a gift of the memories for your companions. Create a photo or an album (hard copy or digital) of a special event or the time you spent together. Take a video of their progress in learning a new sport and create your own "funniest home video."

### **4. Give a gift of music.**

Nearly everyone loves to listen to some kind of music while they are moving. Walking, running, rollerblading, or biking all go better with the right beat. Put together a mix of your favorite tunes to motivate a friend or family member to keep on trucking. They'll think of you every time they listen and thank you for helping get the activity their body needs.

### **5. Give a gift of warmth.**

Winter creates special challenges for folks who enjoy outdoor activities and great gift-giving opportunities for those who love them. Make or purchase fun hats, headbands, scarves, neck warmers, gloves, mittens, leg warmers, and socks. Your loved ones will think of you every time they head outside, with warm heads, hands, feet, and hearts.

## 5 Inexpensive Ways to Give Green Gifts for a Healthy Planet

It's easy to spend lots of green going green. Everywhere you turn someone is selling the latest organic, natural, free-range, eco-friendly products at not-so-friendly prices. These green gifts are guaranteed to be good for the earth and easy on your holiday budget.

### 1. Go green with digital cards and gifts.

It's wonderful to hear from family and friends at the holidays, but all those cards, letters, and envelopes do generate piles of trash. Electronic cards and letters also convey your love and friendship, along with your concerns for the earth. Some digital gifts are totally waste-free, such as music, video, and book downloads that you order online with an electronic gift card.

### 2. Go green with reusable bags.

Bags are big business these days - just check out [www.reusablebags.com/](http://www.reusablebags.com/). You can buy bags of every size, shape, and design and probably match them to any wardrobe from sleek black to wild animal prints. You don't need to spend a lot of green here either. Visit this site for big, strong bags made from recycled bottles for only \$6 each [www.pattyreeddesigns.com/instatote/](http://www.pattyreeddesigns.com/instatote/).

### 3. Go green with a waste-free lunch.

There is every reason to cut back on the lunch box/bag waste, since the EPA estimates that we toss over 380 billion plastic bags, sacks and wraps every year. The cool new lunch box options for under \$25 come in every color, shape, and material, including insulated bags, plastic laptop boxes, and stainless steel containers, plus washable sandwich bags.

### 4. Go green with recycled fun for kids.

Let your imagination go wild with this one! The basic idea is to create a customized gift box of re-purposed items for a special child on your gift list. Create a dress up treasure chest for a little princess with gently worn fancy clothes, boas, costume jewelry, and other sparklers. Or put together a puppet show box with all the materials to make puppets and their props.

### 5. Go green with gardening stuff.

The dark days of mid-winter are a delightful time to start thinking about spring planting and summer harvest. There are obvious choices, such a new tools or a sun hat, as well as many gardening books. Check out the free, online handouts at <http://gardenguide.montana.edu/>) and share those of interest along with a few seed packs and maybe a pair of gardening gloves.