



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

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

September 2010

Dear Colleagues,

**Welcome to the ninth issue of Eat Right Montana's 2010 campaign: *Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics with Food & Fitness.*** In our first fall packet, we focus on the importance of family meals for children's health and well-being, getting the most from beef on a budget, and the straight story about using video games to get fit.

We are honored that Montana's own First Lady, Nancy Schweitzer, is quoted in our media release in her role as the 2010 Honorary Montana Chair of *Family Day*. For kits to promote family meals, visit <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/tools-you-can-use/family-dinner-kit/> and [www.school-wellness.org/indeEnrichingFamilyMealtimesDownloads.aspx](http://www.school-wellness.org/indeEnrichingFamilyMealtimesDownloads.aspx).

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We welcome any comments and suggestions. Wherever possible, we want to incorporate your ideas and put them into our 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 2010 sponsors listed on the right. Please help ERM continue our tradition of positive, practical health information by becoming one of our 2010 sponsors or with a supporting subscription of \$50 per year. To discuss sponsorship, please contact ERM Chair Kim Pullman at [kpullman@mt.gov](mailto:kpullman@mt.gov)

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**Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics 2010**



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

September 2010

## Montana's First Lady Promotes Family Mealtimes and Conversations

Ah September in Montana! As the seasons shift from summer to autumn, children head back to school and fall sports kick into high gear. After the lazy days of summer, schedules can easily become hectic and family mealtimes quickly turn into drive-thru dinners eaten in the car or in front of the TV.

"This is the perfect time to make a commitment to enjoying more dinners together," says First Lady Nancy Schweitzer, Honorary Chair of *Family Day* in Montana. "*Family Day-A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children*<sup>™</sup>, celebrated this year on September 27th, is a national effort to encourage parents to have frequent dinners with their kids. Something as simple as a family dinner can have an important impact on our children's lives; there are so many school and life lessons that can be learned at the dinner table."

*Family Day-A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children*<sup>™</sup> is a national movement to inform parents that the engagement fostered during frequent family dinners is an effective tool to keep America's kids substance free. It was established in 2001 by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, based on research showing that the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs. You can read the research, take the Family Day STAR Pledge, and download a free Family Dinner Kit at [www.CASAFamilyDay.org](http://www.CASAFamilyDay.org).

According to the Eat Right Montana coalition, preventing substance abuse is just one of many important reasons to make family mealtimes a priority even during the busiest times of the year. Cooking, eating, and talking together can help children be happier, healthier, and more successful at school. Parenting and health experts agree that this is a simple family habit with significant long-term benefits. Here are some of the impressive benefits that accrue when families eat together five or more times per week:

- **School success:** Mealtime conversations translate into academic success. As children listen to adults, they learn language skills, such as new vocabulary and sentence structure. These skills, which are necessary for reading comprehension and for verbal expression, help children do better in the classroom and on tests.
- **Better nutrition:** When families make mealtimes a priority, they naturally tend to pay more attention to what is served. Children who have more family meals get more of the nutrient-rich foods that build strong bodies and smart brains: more fruits, veggies, lean meats, and milk; fewer fried foods and soft drinks.
- **Healthier weights:** Smart eating habits help children avoid problems like being seriously overweight or developing an eating disorder. During family meals, adults can model positive habits for kids, such as eating slowly, enjoying a variety of foods, and stopping when comfortably satisfied rather than overstuffed.

"By making the pledge to have more family meals, you are strengthening and uniting your family," notes the First Lady. "The time that you spend with your children improves their health, builds trust, and opens the door to communication. I also encourage families to talk about where your food came from and explore Montana's great local foods, and especially to cook the meal together!"

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)

**Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics 2010**

## 5 Smart Ways to Enjoy Lean Beef on a Budget

The good news about today's beef is that there are 29 cuts that meet government guidelines for lean - and beef choices to satisfy all tastes, schedules and budgets. You can enjoy the flavors you love - without sacrificing nutrition or breaking your food budget. Here are five easy ways to put some delicious protein on the table.

### 1. Choose less expensive, more flavorful cuts.

Instead of buying pre-cut meat for kabobs, stew, and stir-fry, save money by choosing steaks or roasts and cutting into the meat cubes or strips. You can also buy boneless roasts to cut into steaks (your butcher may be willing to do the cutting for you). Look for beef cuts like chuck shoulder, bottom round, petite fillet, tri-tip, and ranch steak.

### 2. Match the cooking method to the cut.

Matching the cut to the cooking method is the key to moist, tender, flavorful beef. Less-tender steak cuts from the chuck, round, and flank (shoulder, eye round, top round, and skirt steak) require a tenderizing marinade before grilling or broiling. Moist heat cooking methods, such as braising or a slow cooker, also guarantee flavorful results.

### 3. Stretch your beef dollar with sales.

Smart shoppers know that sales are a food budget's best friend, so buy extra and freeze for later use. It's safe to freeze beef in original packaging or to rewrap it. For long term freezing, overwrap store plastic with aluminum foil, freezer paper, or freezer-weight plastic bags to prevent 'freezer burn.' Use frozen steaks and roasts in 9 to 12 months.

### 4. Plan to cook once and dine twice.

Preparing extra beef ahead of time is an easy way to serve delicious dishes that save on preparation time and food budgets at the same time. A grilled steak one night becomes the main ingredient for tomorrow's protein-packed salad. Or crumble leftover cooked lean burgers into chili, tacos, pizza, or pasta dishes for a planned meal the next day.

### 5. Take a (tri) tip from the experts.

Need some new ideas for cooking a tri-tip roast - or grilling a new type of steak from the meat case? No worries - help is just a mouse click away at websites from National Cattlemen's Beef Association and state beef councils. Search for your state site or go to [www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/](http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/), [www.montanabeefcouncil.org/](http://www.montanabeefcouncil.org/), or [www.txbeef.org/](http://www.txbeef.org/).

## Slow Cooker Sloppy Joes

### Ingredients:

- 2 pounds 95% lean ground beef
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1½ teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 3 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup rolled oats, quickly cooking or regular

### Instructions:

- 1) Brown ground beef in skillet; drain any fat.
- 2) Put ground beef, onions and green pepper into 2 ½ quart slow cooker.
- 3) Add all other ingredients, except rolled oats. Stir well.
- 4) Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. Stir in rolled oats. With quick oats, serve immediately. With regular rolled oats, stir in and continue cooking for 10 minutes.

**YIELD: 8 servings (½ cup)**

### Cooking with children:

- Have older children chop vegetables and stir ground meat while it browns.
- Allow younger children to measure dry and liquid items.

### Substitutions and additions:

- Use local beef when possible.
- Ground wild meat (venison, elk, etc.) or ground turkey may be substituted for ground beef.
- Additional vegetables, such as chopped carrots, may be added to taste.

### Serving suggestions:

- Serve Sloppy Joe meat on whole grain buns with a tossed green salad or fresh fruit.
- Serve meat on a whole grain bun with a crunchy cabbage or broccoli slaw as a topping.
- Serve meat on baked potato topped with shredded cheese.
- Serve in a whole wheat pita pocket for a meal on the go.
- Serve with raw vegetables and dip - or with black-eyed peas or black beans.

### Nutrition Analysis

Serving Size: ½ cup	Total Carb: 19.2 g
Calories: 236	Dietary Fiber: 1.1 g
Total Fat: 4.6 g	Sodium: 128 mg
Calories from Fat: 17.6%	Protein: 25.6 g
Saturated Fat: 4.1 g	Calcium: 16.7 mg
Trans Fat: 0.0 g	Iron: 3.5 mg

### Source:

University of Kentucky Extension



## 5 Easy Ways to Make Cooking Cool for Kids

Cooking with kids helps teach many things in addition to food and nutrition skills. Cooking can help teach culture (different people enjoy a variety of foods); real life math (fractions for doubling or halving ingredients); organization (getting things ready); and following directions (reading a recipe). For more information about easy family meals, visit [www.school-wellness.org/indeEnrichingFamilyMealtimesDownloads.aspx](http://www.school-wellness.org/indeEnrichingFamilyMealtimesDownloads.aspx).

### **1. Get kids involved in planning meals and snacks.**

Although you may see cooking as a chore, kids see the kitchen as an exciting and even a magical place. Everyone loves to be involved in choosing their favorite dishes for meals and foods for snacks. For small children, eating becomes something much more special when *“I got to pick it out”* – and even better when *“I made it myself.”*

### **2. Get kids involved in shopping for new foods.**

Food shopping with children works best when they are well rested and not hungry. Use your trip through the aisles to talk about possible meals and different ways to prepare various foods. Allow children to choose a new item that appeals to them – like a fresh fruit or vegetable from the produce department, a local farmer’s market, or your garden.

### **3. Get kids involved in kitchen safety.**

All children need adult supervision in the kitchen. Give frequent reminders about what is OK to touch and which items could be dangerous. Talk about which kitchen tasks are for grown-ups and which are for kids. Establish kitchen rules, like never touching a hot stove, being careful with knives, washing hands often, and keeping all surfaces clean too.

### **4. Get kids involved in preparing tasty recipes.**

Children are able to manage different kitchen tasks at different ages. A preschooler can stir ingredients that have been pre-measured; an elementary age child can read the recipe and do the measuring and mixing themselves; tweens can learn to cut, chop, and dice safely; and teens may be able to try challenging techniques from a TV cooking show.

### **5. Get kids involved in setting an appealing table.**

Children are justifiably proud when they make even simple dishes, like a fruit salad or a sandwich, themselves. You can reinforce their success (and desire to try cooking again) by making the table setting special as well. Put their creation on a ‘fancy’ plate, light a small candle, use colored napkins, or put some flowers in a vase.

## 5 Straight Facts about Video Games and Fitness

Active video games, such as Wii Fit™, Gold's Gym Cardio Workout, and others, have become very popular gifts in the past few years. They are found in family living rooms and even in school gyms. The important question is: Can these games actually improve fitness in our increasingly sedentary society? The answer: **It depends!**

### **1. Active video games can provide moderate activity.**

Based on independent research (not on company claims), games can expend more energy than just sitting on a couch watching TV or playing a regular video game. The energy expended is, however, highly variable from person to person. Overall, the calories burned by active video games are generally in the same range as moderate walking.

### **2. Active video games can help very sedentary folks.**

One of the best uses for active video games may be helping very sedentary children and adults (including older adults) become more confident in their ability to do physical things. The games allow people to experiment in the privacy of their own homes - and to discover that they are able to enjoy moving their bodies in different ways.

### **3. Active video game measurements may be flawed for kids.**

Several experts in kinesiology (the science of human movement) have questioned the accuracy of the measurements, such as BMI (Body Mass Index) and calories burned, reported in active video games. In particular, the BMI calculators on some games may not be using data that is accurate for children, whose BMI is calculated differently than adults.

### **4. Active video games must be used consistently.**

Few long-term studies have measured active video games in 'real life' situations. A study at the University of Mississippi that actually measured the impact of Wii Fit™ use in several families indicated some possible pitfalls. While some fitness indicators did improve in the beginning of the study, the minutes of use - and fitness levels - declined over several weeks.

### **5. Active video games are not a substitute for outdoor play.**

"Go outside and play" had been the mantra of parents for generations, until the advent of what some are calling the 'Playstation Generation.' The work of researchers around the world is confirming the wisdom of the advice to be active outside. Several recent studies have noted the physical, mental, and psychological benefits of outdoor activities.