



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

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

November 2010

Dear Colleagues,

**Welcome to the 11th issue of Eat Right Montana's 2010 campaign: *Treasure Your Family's Health: Back-to-Basics with Food & Fitness.*** This month, we discuss food insecurity in Montana and how to make your holiday food bank donation more meaningful. We also feature a tasty lentil soup recipe and other ideas for enjoying legumes.

Michele Obama's *Let's Move* campaign includes an expansion of The President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, now covering food as well as physical activity (@ [www.fitness.gov/](http://www.fitness.gov/)). In the process, they have reinvigorated the President's Fitness Challenge and introduced PALA, the feature of our fitness handout this month. **Check it out!**

**Media Release:**

*Addressing Holiday Food Insecurity for Our Montana Neighbors*

**Nutrition Basics:**

*Make Meaningful Food Donations*

**November Recipe:**

*Simple & Tasty Lentil Soup*

**Cooking Basics:**

*Enjoy Legumes (Dried Beans, Peas, and Lentils)*

**Fitness Basics:**

*Move Toward a President's Active Living Award*

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**

November 2010

## Addressing Holiday Food Insecurity for Our Montana Neighbors

Ah November in Montana! As the holiday season begins to shift into high gear, families across the Treasure State begin to dream of gifts, celebrations, and festive meals. However, many of our friends and neighbors will need our help to meet their basic needs, as well as our donations to bring holiday cheer to the table.

“Hunger is a serious concern for many of our neighbors throughout the year,” says Minkie Medora, RD (registered dietitian) and chairwoman of the Montana Food Security Council. “We are especially concerned about increases in hunger among our most vulnerable citizens. More than 1 in 3 children are chronically at risk of hunger and food insecurity, which is over 92,000 children across the state. The Montana Food Bank Network has seen a dramatic increase in children needing emergency food from 2009 through 2010.”

Children who are hungry struggle with school and are at greater risk for academic problems. Since hungry children have difficulty concentrating, they often do poorly in the classroom and fail to advance from grade to grade. This affects their prospects of completing school or going to college, which in turn affects their earning power as adults. Being hungry or food insecure can lead to a cascade of negative outcomes -- academically as well as socially. That’s why the Office of Public Instruction and Food Security Council ([www.mfbn.org/fsc](http://www.mfbn.org/fsc)) sponsored a Montana Summit to End Childhood Hunger in September 2010.

“At the summit, we discussed long-term solutions to hunger in Montana and dispelled some myths about hunger,” explains Medora. “There is a common misperception that if adults or children are overweight, they are not poor or hungry.” In fact, poor families eat when there is money to buy food, and do without when money runs out. This results in feast or famine eating, as well as choosing low-cost food that tends to be high in calories but low in nutrients. When families are not able to have healthful, nutrient-rich food throughout the month, they make do with what is available, leading to under-nutrition.

We can all help address food security, during the holidays and all year long. According to Medora, here are three effective ways to fight hunger and feed hope in your local community:

- **Donate cash:** Food pantries and banks, like those in the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN), are able to get their money’s worth from monetary donations. By buying in bulk and working with food brokers for deep discounts, MFBN can buy food for 8 meals with every \$1.00 donation.
- **Donate nutrient-rich foods:** If you prefer to donate food, buy needed or requested items rather than using unwanted packages from your kitchen cupboard. Useful donations include ready-to-eat protein foods (peanut butter and canned tuna or chicken), as well as chili, stews, hearty soups, and fruit canned in juice.
- **Support long-term solutions:** Across Montana, local groups are getting together to explore new solutions for food security, including community gardens, improved access to affordable food, and more collaboration among hunger agencies. Check with your MSU Extension office to find a group in your city or town.

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)

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

## 5 Nutrient-Rich Ways to Make Meaningful Food Donations

Most food banks/pantries prefer cash donations, so that they can maximize their purchase of most-needed items. When you do donate food, focus on the nutrient-rich options listed below. Most locations will refuse perishable items, homemade products, unlabeled cans, home canned foods, and any open packages.

### 1. Donate protein foods.

These more expensive items are usually very welcome donations for hungry families. Options include canned tuna, salmon, and chicken. Canned meals - such as beef stew, chili, or hearty soups - are also good choices. Other shelf stable proteins include nuts, sunflower seeds, and peanut butter, as well as canned beans, peas, and lentils.

### 2. Donate whole grain foods.

Grain staples are important foods for every family. Maximize the nutritional value of your food donations by choosing whole grain options whenever possible. Meaningful options include whole grain pastas, quick cooking brown rice, and breakfast cereals that are lower in sugar and higher in fiber (ex. oatmeal, Cheerios®, and Chex®).

### 3. Donate canned/dried fruits and 100% juices.

Fruit and 100% juice are good sources of vitamin C (and sometimes vitamin A), as well as potassium. Excellent shelf-staple options include fruits canned in juice (pineapple, peaches, apricots, etc.), as well as applesauce and dried fruit (without added sugar, if possible). Purchase 100% fruit juice or juice mixtures in cans, boxes, or plastic bottles.

### 4. Donate canned vegetables and 100% juice.

Reduced-sodium veggies are also important sources of vitamins, potassium, and fiber, while veggie juice can be an excellent source of vitamins A and C. Tomato products - such as tomato sauce, stewed tomatoes, chopped tomatoes, prepared spaghetti sauce, and 100% tomato juice - are especially nutritious and versatile items to donate.

### 5. Donate shelf-stable dairy foods.

Dairy foods are important for families, especially growing children. Cash donations to food banks can help to purchase low-fat fluid milk, cheese, and yogurt. You can also make direct donations of shelf-stable products, including dehydrated milk powder instant breakfast, and evaporated canned milk.



## Simple & Tasty Lentil Soup

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped (1 cup)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh or canned tomato
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 1 1/4 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup dried lentils
- 4 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

### Instructions:

- 1) Heat oil in a 4- to 5-quart heavy saucepan over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then sauté onion, stirring, until golden, about 5 minutes.
- 2) Add garlic, carrots, tomato, celery, cumin, and salt and sauté, stirring, 2 minutes.
- 3) Add lentils, water, and broth and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until lentils are tender, about 20 minutes.
- 4) Stir in parsley, then season with salt and pepper.

**YIELD: 8 servings (1 cup each)**

A simple, quick to prepare, tasty lentil soup that you'll make over and over again.

Recipe was adapted from one in the September 2002 Gourmet magazine.

### Variations:

- Try specialty lentil varieties, such as **Petite Crimson** or **Black Beluga** from [www.timelessfood.com/](http://www.timelessfood.com/).
- For a vegetarian variation, substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth.
- Substitute (or add) other roots vegetables (like parsnips, turnips, or sweet potatoes) for the carrots.

### Nutrition Analysis

Serving Size: 1 cup	Total Carb: 18.7 g
Calories: 118	Dietary Fiber: 8.3 g
Total Fat: 1.5 g	Sodium: 186 mg
Calories from Fat: 11.7%	Protein: 7.7 g
Saturated Fat: 0.2 g	Calcium: 38.0 mg
Trans Fat: 0.0 g	Iron: 2.3 mg

### Source:

Timeless Natural Foods

[www.timelessfood.com/](http://www.timelessfood.com/)



## 5 Easy Ways to

### Enjoy Legumes (Dried Beans, Peas, and Lentils)

There are dozens of delicious reasons to enjoy more legumes like black beans, navy beans, garbanzo beans (aka chickpeas), and split peas, as well as multiple colors of lentils. Nutrient-rich legumes are a tasty way to get the dietary fiber that most of us are missing. Legumes are so good for you that they carry an on-package health claim: *Diets including beans may reduce your risk of heart disease and certain cancers.*

#### 1. Spill beans out of a can.

For immediate gratification, pre-cooked, canned beans are a convenient choice. Make sure that your cupboards are never bare of beans - and you'll be ready for legumes at any meal. Rinse beans under cold running water to remove extra sodium. Add beans to homemade or canned soup, to tossed vegetable salads, or to Mexican dishes for an instant nutrient boost.

#### 2. Dish it up with dried beans.

Dried beans are one of nature's most economical and nutrient-rich foods. To cook, soak overnight, then simmer in water or broth for one or more hours, depending on type. They can also be prepared more quickly using hot soak or quick soak methods. For detailed instructions on cooking methods, visit [www.mayoclinic.com/health/legumes/NU00260](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/legumes/NU00260).

#### 3. Learn more about lentils.

Lentils are a delicious, inexpensive, Montana-grown product, that come in many colors: green, red, pink, brown, and even black. Busy cooks appreciate their versatility and the fact that they cook quickly (25-50 minutes) without soaking. A staple of Indian cuisine, lentils are often served as dal - spicy combinations of lentils, garlic, onions, vegetables, and curry.

#### 4. Experiment with split peas.

Like other legumes, split peas are an inexpensive source of protein, fiber, and B-vitamins. Like lentils, they cook quickly without soaking. Any web search will produce dozens of delicious split pea recipes, beyond pea and ham soup. Consider pea soup with winter squash, kale, or cabbage - or by adding some sweet yellow split peas in your chili recipe.

#### 5. Get rid of gas troubles.

Some people avoid beans because of gas. Fortunately, you can reduce the gas causing *raffinose*, a natural sugar in beans, with careful rinsing. Rinse canned beans thoroughly before serving. Cover dried beans with 10 cups water, boil for 2-3 minutes; cover and soak overnight. Then, discard the water, along with most of the gas causing sugars.

## 5 Great Reasons to Get Moving with the Million PALA Challenge

Looking for a challenge to kick your fitness level up a notch? Wish that you had a way to track your family's physical activity - and reward them for their achievements? Have a group of friends or coworkers who want to form a fitness team and make a seriously fun commitment to better health? **It's time to learn exactly what PALA means!!**

### 1. PALA is for anyone who wants to get fit.

The *Presidential Active Lifestyle Award* (PALA at [www.presidentschallenge.org/](http://www.presidentschallenge.org/)) is a new program from The President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition. Americans of all ages can sign up as individuals or groups - at no cost. Find information online for families, worksites, classroom teachers, and homeschoolers, as well as people with disabilities.

### 2. PALA puts the fun in fitness.

Goals for the *Presidential Active Lifestyle Award* are simple. For adults, at least 30 minutes of activity per day, at least 5 days a week, for 6 out of 8 weeks. For youth (6 to 17 years), at least 60 minutes per day, at least 5 days a week, for 6 out of 8 weeks. But how you get that activity is up to YOU! From aerobics and archery to yoga and Zumba® - it ALL counts!

### 3. PALA helps you stay on track.

The *Presidential Active Lifestyle Award* offers free software - with a side of motivation. You can create an individual account and track your progress online with a free personal activity log. Educators can also download free *Fitness File* software to track their students' progress and fitness tests - making everyone eligible for three different award levels.

### 4. PALA is packed with information.

Need information about the power of fitness and physical activity? The PALA website has it all at the click of your mouse - you just have to get up from your computer and get moving. Look for fitness guides for adults and teens, benefits of becoming more active, setting goals, staying committed, in-depth tips about featured activities, and a *Fitness is Fun* newsletter.

### 5. PALA means AWARDS for your efforts!

The PALA tracker is so smart that it tells you when you have achieved an award level. If you like tangible recognition for all your hard work, the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition can provide this too. The website's store features a wide variety of inexpensive merchandise (a certificate + emblem for completing the PALA is only \$1.50).