



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

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

FEBRUARY 2011

Dear Colleagues,

**Welcome to issue number two of our 2011 campaign: FIT KIDS = HAPPY KIDS: Healthy Futures for Montanans.** Breakfast is our focus this month with an emphasis on morning meals on-the-go, including a recipe for families and the benefits of breakfast at school. We also feature fun tips for indoor activities when it is freezing outside, plus important advice on how to talk to children about weight issues.

School breakfast has been getting a lot of well-deserved attention for its multiple benefits: academic, health, and social. Montana schools are doing their part to close the breakfast gap. Celebrate National School Breakfast Week (March 7-11) by eating in your local school!

**Media Release:**

*School Breakfast: A Kick-Start for Academic Success*

**Family Nutrition: Plan. Eat. Enjoy**

*Breakfast on-the-Go*

**February Recipe:**

*Hellgate School Breakfast Bites*

**Family Fitness: Plan. Play. Enjoy**

*Fun Indoor Activities for Winter Days*

**Research for Real Life: Read. Change. Enjoy.**

*Talking to Children about Weight*

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*

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**FIT KIDS=HAPPY KIDS: Healthy Futures for Montanans 2011**



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

February 2011

## School Breakfast: A Morning Kick-Start for Academic Success

When talking about the future of the Treasure State, there is one fact that everyone can agree on: Montana will need a strong, diverse, and well-educated workforce to compete in a global environment. For today's students, getting the education they need may hinge on a very simple habit -- eating breakfast before school.

"Eating a well-balanced breakfast is essential for learning in any classroom," says Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau. "Schools all across Montana have been expanding their breakfast programs to meet the needs of families during our tough economic times. If children do not have a good breakfast at home, they are unable to learn new material or to concentrate on complex tasks when they get to school."

The benefits of school breakfast programs have been examined in studies across the country. Principals, teachers, school nutrition staff, and health care providers all put their stamp of approval on these programs, because children and teens who regularly participate in school breakfast may potentially:

- **Have fewer tardies and school absences.** For hungry children, breakfast is a reason to get to school.
- **Be ready to learn when class starts.** With a full stomach, children can concentrate on classroom work.
- **Have fewer mistakes and be able to work faster.** This seems to be especially true for math skills.
- **Show improved results on standardized testing.** Memory and verbal skills are also improved.
- **Be better nourished.** They eat more fruit, drink more milk, and consume a wider variety of nutrients.
- **Have healthier weights.** Children and teens who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight.

In the Victor Schools, Child Nutrition Director Maria Stover knows that the morning meal serves a real need for at-risk students. Her cafeteria provides a grab-and-go breakfast (with hot and cold choices) to over 300 students in a total district enrollment of 350 (K-12). She notes the rewards are great for a minimal effort.

On the Rocky Boy's Reservation, director Geri LaMere gets strong administrative support for breakfast in K-6 classrooms. Switching the breakfast from the cafeteria to the classroom increased participation from 30% to nearly 95% of students in those grades. As a result, the children are more alert and ready to learn.

At Lewistown Middle and High Schools, director Cindy Giese offers a self-serve breakfast with a hot entree, cereal, fruit, and other healthful choices. This type of breakfast has helped reduce tardies at the middle school and offers high schoolers with early classes and clubs a place to eat smart and hang out with friends.

"Teachers recommend that students eat a good breakfast during test week," notes Supt. Juneau. "However, children need breakfast every school day. When kids eat breakfast, we see the results in both their school performance and their health. It's exciting to see the innovative ways that Montana schools are making sure kids are healthy, focused, and ready to learn."

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)

## BREAKFAST On-The-Go

Breakfast is essential for success at school (and also very important for how adults perform at work). Kids who regularly eat breakfast tend to have a greater ability to focus on tasks, better classroom behavior, and improved test scores.

When you skip breakfast, your brain does not have the fuel it needs to learn new information or concentrate on complex tasks. If your family's morning schedule is sometimes too complicated for a sit-down breakfast, plan to get one on-the-go.

### PLAN

When you need breakfast on the run, a little planning can save both time and money. By planning ahead, you can skip the fast food drive-thru or convenience store stop - and make sure that your family has the high-octane nutrition they need to succeed.

**Breakfast in the car:** Bring breakfast from home for better nutrition and less money. While not all breakfast foods travel well, there are plenty of delicious options.

**Breakfast at school:** Many schools have great breakfast programs. Cost is minimal (free for eligible families) and the convenience is awesome. Ask about it at your school.

**Breakfast at your desk:** A mid-AM desk-fast may be an option for adults and teens who don't like to eat first thing. Plan to use items that travel well in a backpack.

### EAT

**Whole grains:** Whole grains are the best AM choices for high octane carbohydrate energy. Easy-to-carry choices include: multi-grain bagels, oatmeal-fruit muffins, trail mix made with a whole grain cold cereal, or a favorite sandwich on whole grain bread.

**Calcium-rich foods and drinks:** Most young people (and many adults) are not meeting calcium needs. Low-fat/fat-free dairy foods in AM (milk, yogurt, and cheese) can provide one of your 3-Every-Day. String cheese is perfect for eating on the run.

**Colorful fruits:** While veggies are for breakfast too, most of us are more likely to eat fruit in the AM. Fortunately, fruit - the original fast food - travels well, esp. dried fruit (by itself or in trail mix) and pre-sliced (for convenience) apples, pears, and oranges.

### ENJOY

You can have a power breakfast anywhere -- at home, in the car, at school, or even at your desk. The key is to have a balanced breakfast every day, so that your brain is properly fueled for the learning and living.



## Oatmeal-Fruit Breakfast Bites

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup butter or margarine
- 4 Tbsp. unsweetened applesauce
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2/3 cup crushed pineapple (in juice)
- 1/8 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 1/8 tsp. maple flavoring
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 3/4 cup nonfat, dry milk
- 3/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 rolled cups oats
- 1 cup raisins

### GLAZE (if desired)

- 1/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1 Tbsp. + 2 tsp. unsweetened applesauce

### Instructions:

- 1) Cream butter (or margarine), applesauce, and brown sugar in bowl. Add crushed pineapple with juice, vanilla and maple flavoring.
- 2) Combine flour, dry milk, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. Blend in oats and raisins.
- 3) Drop dough onto baking pan (1/8 cup at a time) and flatten slightly.
- 4) Bake in conventional oven at 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes or convection oven at 325 degrees for 10-12 minutes.
- 5) Mix powdered sugar with applesauce; brush on after bars have cooled.

**YIELD: 24 bars**

- Take time to talk with your children about the importance of breakfast while they help make breakfast bites for busy mornings.
- Serve with a glass of milk or a container of yogurt for a nutrient-rich kick-start to everyone's day.

### Getting kids cooking:

- Children can drop the dough onto the baking sheet.
- Children can make the glaze and "paint" the bars with a baking brush after they have cooled.

### Nutrition Analysis

Serving: 1 bar + glaze	Total Carb: 38.9 g
Calories: 190	Dietary Fiber: 2.6 g
Total Fat: 2.8 g	Sodium: 99 mg
Calories from Fat: 13.5%	Protein: 4.5 g
Saturated Fat: 0.5 g	Calcium: 78.4 mg
Trans Fat: 0.0 g	Iron: 1.2 mg

### Source:

Hellgate Elementary School Foodservice,  
Missoula, Montana



## Indoor Activities for Winter Days

Playing outside is nearly always more fun and usually more vigorous than indoor activity. However, the weather is sometimes just too frightful and families need to have many inside alternatives. Active video games (like Wii™) are an option. Video games usually expend more energy than sitting on a couch in front of the TV or playing regular video games. The energy used does vary dramatically from person to person and is generally in the same range as moderate walking.

### PLAN

**At home:** Make a list of your favorite upbeat music for “dance breaks” (after school, during TV ads, or while doing homework) and be ready for some spontaneous play.

**In school:** Teachers can add brain breaks ([www.jamschoolprogram.com/](http://www.jamschoolprogram.com/)) during class. Many schools also now open their gyms during out-of-school times for families.

**About town:** Family nights are offered in schools, community centers, and YMCA-YWCAs. Check what’s happening in your town or get involved in organizing some!

### PLAY

Here is a short list of indoor activity options for your family. Need more ideas? Get together for a family brainstorm and put your list up on the fridge or bulletin board.

- 1. Dance, dance, dance:** Put on some tunes and rock the house with fun moves.
- 2. Show off your talents:** Let each family member take turns leading an activity.
- 3. Activate commercial breaks:** Get up and get moving during TV breaks.
- 4. Plan a scavenger hunt:** Maybe you can find missing socks and other stuff?
- 5. Build a crawl-thru obstacle course:** Use big pillows, chairs, and blankets.
- 6. Have a hula contest:** All it takes is a hoop or two and a wide open space.
- 7. Play charades:** Use an active theme (like animals) and move like your word.
- 8. Hide and seek:** Use the whole house, basement, and garage (if heated).
- 9. Twist yourself in knots:** For about \$15, the game of Twister is a ton of fun!
- 10. Take a road trip:** Visit a mall for a walk, a Y for a swim, or a rink for a skate.

### ENJOY

**Make it fun, do it together!** Turn off the TV and the other screen entertainment (DVD, computers, and video games). Fill your home with active fun any month of the year.

## Talking to Kids about Weight

Experts recognize that the intense focus on childhood obesity has some potential downsides, including the increase in eating problems among youth of all ages and backgrounds. If you are concerned about a child's weight, here is what the research says are the positive ways to "do no harm" as you are trying to help.

### What the research says

Several recent studies and surveys have looked at the issue of weight management from the point of view of young people. There is some evidence to suggest that:

- Teens may want their parents to be sensitive when talking about weight. They prefer an indirect or "cautious" approach. In other words, they want adults to talk (and model) healthy lifestyles without focusing on body weight, shape, or size specifically.
- Young people can pick up feelings about weight and dieting from adults. When parents are dissatisfied with their bodies and practice unhealthy dieting behaviors, youth tend to feel worse about their bodies and do the same unhealthy things.
- Extreme weight control and eating disorders among teen girls may increase when their parents talk about weight, dieted, and/or encouraged dieting. Children who were teased about their weight had higher BMIs (Body Mass Index) and more extreme diets.

### What your family can do

#### Model healthy behaviors for young people.

- The best approach is to focus on healthy habits rather than on weight, scales, or BMI numbers. Whatever their size, all kids benefit from eating smarter and moving more.
- Research clearly shows that parents make a difference. Stop the "diet talk" and begin to showcase the eating and activity habits that you want your children to practice.

#### Make healthy choices easy, fun, and tasty.

- Regular family mealtimes are one of the best ways to help everybody enjoy nutrition and better health at any weight. Breakfast, lunch or dinner - eat together when you can.
- Make a healthy lifestyle part of every day. Plan nutrient-rich meals together. Prepare tasty snacks together. Play active games together. Invite their friends to join in the fun.

#### Listen more, talk less, and never tease.

- Listen carefully when a child wants to talk about weight or body image issues. Find out if they are being bullied. Do not allow any weight-related teasing in your home.
- **Bottom line:** Help all children learn that everyone's body is special and deserves to be treated well with healthful food, enjoyable physical activity, and positive self-talk.