



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

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

May 2009

Dear Colleagues,

**Happy May Day and welcome to the fifth issue of Eat Right Montana's 2009 campaign: *Going Green: Simple Steps for Montana Families*.** Our May issue focuses on **eco-friendly habits - helping families get into green routines**. Sustainable, fundamental changes in everyday habits are essential for both a healthy planet and healthy lifestyles. In this month's packet, we offer tips for smarter habits in recycling, refrigerator use, and fitness activities.

As Kermit the Frog famously lamented, *"it's not easy being green."* Every day we are faced with multiple environmental choices like the deceptively simple *'paper or plastic'* at the grocery checkout. In our complicated consumer society, no one is perfectly green. However, each one of us can take simple steps toward a more eco-friendly lifestyle, such as recycling one more item every day. Or saying *'no thanks'* to both paper and plastic - and bringing a reusable tote bag on every shopping trip to the supermarket and to the mall.

As always, our May materials offer realistic ways to take those simple steps every day:

- **Media Release - *Billings Schools Get into Green Routines with Smart Recycling Habits***
- **Healthful Eating - *Simple Ways to Go Green (and Save) with Your Fridge Habits***
- **May Recipe - *Broccoli and Red Pepper Stir Fry*** (to serve with Montana grains)
- **Active Lifestyles - *Smart Ways to Make Your Fitness Habit Greener***
- **Eco-Tips - *Cool Ways to Rev Up Your Recycling Habit***

For more on recycling with children and in schools, check out these **non-commercial** sites:

- **Energy Star Kids @ [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=kids.kids\\_index](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=kids.kids_index)**
- **Environmental Kids Club @ [www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/)**
- **Recycling for Kids @ [www.container-recycling.org/kids.htm](http://www.container-recycling.org/kids.htm)**
- **Schools Recycling in North Carolina @ [www.p2pays.org/recycleguys/schools.asp](http://www.p2pays.org/recycleguys/schools.asp)**

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 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**



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

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## Billings Schools Get into Green Routines with Smart Recycling Habits

Even though Earth Day has come and gone, the recycling habit is going strong in Billings schools. From the preschoolers at Billings Head Start to the leaders of the MSU-Billings Student Initiated Recycling Program (SIRP), young people are getting into green routines in school buildings throughout the community. And, their efforts are making a real difference by sending thousands of pounds of waste to recycling bins instead of area landfills.

"We pick up at least 9,000 pounds of paper per month just from the twenty-two elementary schools in Yellowstone Valley Citizen Council's (YVCC) recycling program," says Scott Berens, owner of Earth First Aid Curbside Recycling in Billings ([www.earthfirstaid.com/](http://www.earthfirstaid.com/)). "That's enough paper to fill an Olympic-size swimming pool every school year. Plus we pick up thousands of pounds of other recyclables, such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and magazines. We've seen steadily increasing amounts over the past year. The schools have really gotten involved and made the program a huge success."

Following a pilot in spring 2008, YVCC found local businesses and individuals willing to sponsor pickups at the schools. Berens credits the sponsors, including health providers, architect and engineering offices, real estate brokers, hair salons, and banks, with the getting the program up and running. "However, it's really student energy that has made every day Earth Day in these schools. In several schools, 'green teams' of students actually run the program and even help load the sorted items into our trailers. They've learned an impressive amount about recycling and its impact on the environment."

Billings Public School educators agree that students get seriously excited about their responsibility for recycling. "Our middle school students are fundamental to every effort of the Go Green Castle Rock Recycling Club," says teacher Randy Chase. "We used a student/teacher-produced video at our assembly on Earth Day 2008, and they have recycled literally tons of materials since then." Sandy Abraham, a fourth grade teacher at Miles Avenue Elementary, agrees. "Our Green Team members participate in every part of our program, from educating students and teachers about the importance of recycling to collecting materials throughout the school." Here are Abraham's tips on making school recycling a success:

- **Tap into students' desire to help:** Children like to know that they personally can do important things to help protect the environment. They actually enjoy their job assignments, like collecting recyclables from the classrooms on pickup day.
- **Encourage them to teach others about recycling:** Students love to create posters as everyday reminders to recycle or for special events. They can also do very persuasive presentations for classes, as well as for teacher and parent meetings.
- **Make recycling fun and meaningful:** Allow students to decorate recycling bins or to create a recycling theme song for their class. Integrate recycling into classroom lessons, such as graphing the amounts of various items recycled over time.

"There's no doubt that recycling is a success at Miles Avenue Elementary," notes Ms. Abraham. "Recently, our school was able to decrease our garbage pickup from 3 times a week to just twice! We're now looking for more ways to get families involved in our green efforts. In May, we are sponsoring an event for hard-to-recycle items, like batteries and electronics."

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)

## 5 Simple Ways to Go Green (and Save) with Your Fridge Habits

Your refrigerator uses more electricity than any other appliance and more energy than anything in your home except heating or air conditioning. Upgrading (and downsizing) your old fridge to a new Energy-Star qualified model is one way to save energy, but it does require a major up-front investment. Fortunately, a few changes in your everyday refrigerator habits can also result in a significant savings - for your budget and the planet!

If you do decide to purchase a new refrigerator, skip the automatic ice and water dispensers. They can raise the unit's energy costs by as much as 20 percent and raise the initial cost by \$100 to \$250. When you are ready to get rid of your old refrigerator, contact a local recycling center to ask about proper disposal in your area.

### 1. Use glass containers whenever possible.

Switching from plastic to glass containers is a win-win for the environment and for your food budget. Glass keeps foods and beverages colder than plastic, which means the fridge works less and uses less electricity. Since the items are colder, they stay fresh longer. If you use clear glass, they usually get eaten sooner (since your family can see what is in them). Using glass also helps avoid any potential problems with compounds leaching into food from reused plastic containers.

### 2. Fill 'er up - and space things out.

Here's what you would see if you opened the door (briefly to minimize loss of cold air) on a well-stocked, eco-friendly fridge: Shelves that are relatively full of foods and beverages (in glass containers, when possible) with small spaces between things to allow for air flow and for new items to cool quickly. If your fridge often has bare shelves, pack the extra space with water-filled containers. You'll use less energy - and have plenty of water on hand in an emergency.

### 3. Take your temperature regularly.

The optimal refrigerator temperature for food safety is 36 to 40° F. However, for every degree below 38° F, the unit will consume 5 percent more energy. A separate refrigerator thermometer is the best way to keep your fridge in the safest and most efficient zone. Leave the thermometer in an easy-to-read location, check it regularly, and aim for a range between 38 and 40° F. Every few weeks, use the thermometer to check your freezer unit - which should be right around 0° F.

### 4. Mind the expiration dates.

To keep your fridge (and freezer) from being a food safety hazard (or home to nasty little bacteria), become an expiration date checker. A "sell by" date tells grocers when to pull the item from their shelves; you have a few days after that to use the product. A "use by" date is just that; consume it or turn it into compost. Get in the habit of writing a date on leftovers and using them within 3 or 4 days. For more details on storage times, visit [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fttstore.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fttstore.html).

### 5. Keep it clean - naturally.

Regular cleaning (inside and out) will keep a fridge operating efficiently, while preventing food spoilage and waste. Once or twice a year, use a soft attachment on your vacuum cleaner to remove all dust from the coils behind and underneath your unit. Once every couple of months, wipe dust and grime from the rubber seals around the door - also checking for cracks or brittleness. Get into the habit of wiping up fridge spills as soon as they occur. Simple formulas clean well without chemicals. Try a mild soap, one-to-one vinegar and water, or baking soda and a damp sponge for sticky messes.



## Broccoli and Red Pepper Stir Fry

### Ingredients:

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. walnut (or sesame) oil
- 2 large cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 3 cups broccoli florets
- 2 Tbsp. water
- 1 large red bell pepper, washed, cored, and cut into short strips
- 1 medium onion, peeled, cut in half, and then into lengthwise slivers
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice (fresh squeezed or bottled)
- ½ tsp. salt

### Instructions:

1. Prepare all ingredients before starting to cook.
2. Heat oils in large skillet over HIGH heat. Add garlic and sauté only until slightly cooked; do not brown.
3. Immediately add broccoli. Stir fry continuously until all broccoli has turned to a bright green color.
4. Add 2 tablespoons water, cover and remove from heat for 2 minutes.
5. Return skillet to HIGH heat.
6. Add red pepper and onion. Continue to cook, stirring for another 2-3 minutes. Vegetables will be crisp and brilliant in color when properly cooked.
7. Toss with lemon juice and salt and serve.

**YIELD: 4 servings**

### Ideas/Substitutions

- Substitute frozen broccoli or frozen mixed stir-fry vegetables for fresh. Use green, orange, or yellow peppers instead of red.
- Serve with your favorite whole grain - brown rice or Montana-grown bulgur (cracked wheat), barley, or wheat pasta.

### Nutrition Analysis

Serving Size: 1 cup

Calories: 61

Total Fat: 2.7 g

Calories from Fat: 35%

Saturated Fat: 0.3 g

Trans Fat: 0.0 g

Total Carb: 9 g

Dietary Fiber: 3 g

Sodium: 308 mg

Protein: 2 g

Calcium: 44 mg

Iron: 0.75 mg

### Recipe Source

Adapted and used with permission of **Fruits & Veggies—More Matters®**

Recipe appears courtesy of Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH). This recipe meets Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's (CDC) strict nutrition guidelines as a healthy recipe. Find this recipe and others like it online at [www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org).

## 5 Smart Ways to Make Your Fitness Habit Greener

Adding more activity to your life is a wonderful way to improve your physical and mental health and to reduce your stress levels in these tough times. However, some exercise routines have significant environmental impact. Just think about all the energy that gets consumed as you drive to the gym, walk on an electric treadmill, use some electric weight machines, drink (and throw away) a bottle of water, take a hot shower, use multiple towels, and then drive back home or to work. To green up your fitness routine, you don't have to stop going to the gym - you can just make a few changes in your usual habits. Here are five smart ways to do just that!

### 1. Walk (or bike) more, drive less.

Can you walk, bike, share a ride, or take the bus to the gym a couple days a week? If it's too far to your current gym, is there one closer to your work or home? How about substituting a nice long walk for one or two of your weekly workouts? Walking outside is just as good for your body as walking on an indoor treadmill. Some research suggests that outdoor activity may have more psychological benefits and it certainly is the best way to get in touch with the beauty of nature.

### 2. Pick up some recyclables along the way.

Want to pitch in to clean up your personal environment? Just bring a bag on your next walk to the gym or anywhere else. That way, you'll be able to pick up the inevitable bottles and pop cans that someone else has tossed out and recycle them when you get back home. Want to be a really good environmental steward? Adopt (unofficially) a block or mile near your work or home. Make it a habit to pick up the recyclables and/or trash whenever you walk that way.

### 3. Rethink your sports drink.

Drinking plenty of water is a super healthy habit (and critically important when you are active in hot or humid weather). Throwing away your empty bottle of water or sports drink is not at all healthy for the environment (BILLIONS of bottles end up in landfills every year). Tossing your bottle into a recycling bin is good, but an even better habit is to refill and reuse your own BPA-free plastic, metal, or glass bottle. Like flavoring? Add a few slices of lemon, lime, or orange.

### 4. Get your gym to start thinking green.

Many fitness centers are already going green with recycling bins, water coolers to refill bottles, energy audits, and other eco-friendly practices. As a dues-paying member, you can push your gym into greener habits by making suggestions to the management. If your center is a non-profit or community effort (like a YMCA or YWCA), you can discuss your concerns with the board of directors. They may even be ready for a 'green committee' (if one doesn't already exist).

### 5. Check out eco-friendly options in fitness gear, shoes, and clothing.

Equipment and apparel companies are also jumping on the green fast track. While some of their promotions are definitely 'greenwashing,' there are positive products, such as yoga mats made from recycled materials and clothing from renewable resources (such as wool and bamboo). However, your greenest option is actually one that will save you green as well: Buy good quality gear, take good care of it, use it for as long as you can, and donate (or recycle) it when you no longer want it.

## 5 Cool Ways to Rev Up Your Recycling Habit

In terms of managing waste, **RECYCLING** is the third most important strategy after **REDUCING** and **REUSING**. Once you have **REDUCED** waste as much as possible and **REUSED** everything you can, it's time to **RECYCLE**. The third R is defined as *taking a product at the end of its useful life and using all or part of it to make another product*. The internationally recognized symbol for **RECYCLING** is three arrows moving in a triangle, representing the three steps of collection, re-manufacture, and resale. Here are five easy ways to rev up your personal recycling program.

### 1. Make a **COMMITMENT** to recycle one more thing.

Most American families are already doing some recycling, so thanks for everything you already do. But think: *Is there one more product that we could easily recycle?* If you are already recycling all your plastic bottles and aluminum cans, how about junk mail or magazines? If you are already doing paper products, what about cardboard? Need some help? Go to <http://earth911.com/>, where you can search for recycling tips, as well as recycling locations by item and zip code.

### 2. Put recycling boxes and bins in **CONVENIENT** places.

We are all creatures of habit - and we are more likely to develop a habit when it is really easy for us to do. Want your family to recycle more? Make it super easy for them to collect recyclables! Think about where people are using an item (or throwing it away) and make your collection points as close as possible. Put an extra bin near the garbage for bottles and cans. Put a compost container on the counter near the dishwasher. Put a basket for old magazines near the couch.

### 3. Get **CREATIVE** with recycling-on-the-go.

Many of us are very good about recycling at home (where it is convenient), but we get careless when we are out-and-about. There are several ways to get into a solid on-the-go recycling habit: (1) Keep a box or bag for recyclables in your car or truck. Toss everything in and separate when you get back home. (2) Make a family game out of finding public recycling bins in malls, airports, and hotels. (3) Check online for recycling centers or programs as you are planning a road trip.

### 4. **COLLECT** the recyclables at work, school, or church.

If you're already in a recycling groove, it's time to get other folks on board. While a major recycling program may be more than you want to take on, it's easy to start small and see where things go. Put out a box or bin for one item (bottles, cans, newspapers, or office paper) and bring it home to add to your usual recycling stream. If that item goes well, add another recyclable or start a green team to share the recycling load (young folks are especially eager to get involved in eco-issues).

### 5. Support a **COMMUNITY** recycling effort.

Have a bit more time (or money) to commit to recycling? Get involved with others who are working to increase recycling in your community, like the businesses and individuals who donated funds to provide regular pick up of recyclables in Billings Public Schools. **Recycle Montana** (<http://recyclemontana.org/>) is a great place to find out what is happening in recycling programs across Big Sky country. They have some good links and Montana-specific FAQs about recycling.