



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

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

April 2011

Dear Colleagues,

**Welcome to the fourth issue of our 2011 campaign: FIT KIDS = HAPPY KIDS: Healthy Futures for Montanans.** We are delighted to feature *Nancy's Garden* ([mathscience.mt.gov/pages/nancysgarden.htm](http://mathscience.mt.gov/pages/nancysgarden.htm)), a new project from Montana's First Lady, Nancy Schweitzer. This is a perfect project for Spring and Mother Earth Day 2011, April 22.

Details about *Nancy's Garden* and successful Montana gardening are available through the links featured in this month's media release. For more on gardening with children, visit [www.gardenabcs.com/](http://www.gardenabcs.com/) and check out the books by Anne Nagro, including the newly published *Our Super Garden: Learning the Power of Healthy Eating, by Eating What We Grow*

**Media Release:**

*Nancy's Garden Grows Gardens, Minds, and Healthy Bodies*

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

*Lunch at Home*

**April Recipe:**

*Split Pea Soup*

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

*Gardening for Fun and Food*

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

*Getting Children to Eat Their Vegetables*

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



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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

April 2011

## Nancy's Garden Grows Plants, Minds, and Healthy Bodies

As a botanist, Montana's First Lady Nancy Schweitzer is a strong supporter of math and science education in Montana schools. Together, the Governor and First Lady launched a Math and Science Initiative to help Montana youth discover math and science in K-12 classrooms and higher education, find out about career opportunities, and explore Montana's splendid surroundings. The Initiative's newest feature, *Nancy's Garden* ([mathscience.mt.gov](http://mathscience.mt.gov)), brings fresh vegetables and healthy eating to the classroom.

"*Nancy's Garden* is a new opportunity that can help create the next generation of gardeners, scientists, and engineers in Montana," says the First Lady. "The Governor and I hope teachers find this a helpful, hands-on resource to nurture gardening, promote healthy eating, and explore math and science."

*Nancy's Garden* provides an exciting gardening experience for Montana 4th grade students by supplying grow boxes, seeds, lesson plans, instructions, and other materials for their classrooms. The teacher's guide was designed with the help of gardening and nutrition experts from the Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana State University Extension, and Montana Team Nutrition. The lesson plans take students through planting, growing, and finally eating produce from *Nancy's Garden*. With tips from the Governor's Office of Community Service, teachers are encouraged to connect their classroom garden to the community with volunteers and service learning activities.

"Montana Team Nutrition is honored to be part of the project," says Katie Bark, Program Director. "Eating the veggies grown in *Nancy's Garden* is a great way to celebrate with delicious foods students have grown themselves. Here's how families can get involved at home by gardening with their kids this summer."

- **Garden together in a container at home:** Like the 4th graders involved in *Nancy's Garden*, families can enjoy planting vegetables in containers when growing plants outdoors is not practical or when yard space is limited.
- **Garden together in the backyard:** A family that gardens together can stay healthy together. Backyard gardens provide plenty of opportunities for fun outdoor activities - and a "sneaky" way to get kids to eat more vegetables. When children plant and take care of vegetables, they are much more likely to eat the products - sometimes before they even get to the kitchen.
- **Garden together in a community plot or schoolyard:** Many Montana communities now offer communal gardening spaces, like the long running Garden City Harvest ([www.gardencityharvest.org](http://www.gardencityharvest.org)) in Missoula. MSU Extension provides information on finding or starting a garden in your town and many other gardening topics on their website ([www.msuextension.org](http://www.msuextension.org)) and through local county Extension offices.

"Montana's 4th grade students are in for a wonderful growing experience this spring," says the First Lady. "I encourage families across Big Sky country to join in the fun and grow gardens at home too. It is such a natural, hands-on way to get students excited about math and science and engaged in healthy eating!"

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)



## LUNCH at HOME

A nutrient-rich lunch can add a powerful punch to your day and your health. The right combo of carbohydrates and protein - with just a bit of fat - provides plenty of energy for your busy afternoon (without making you overfull and sleepy).

Nutrition experts agree that how you eat may be just as important as what you eat. Eating slowly and listening to internal signals of fullness may help prevent afternoon indigestion and help you maintain a healthy weight at the same time.

### PLAN

Whether it is a weekday lunch for one or a weekend lunch for the whole family, having a plan makes it much easier to have satisfying and healthful options for everyone. Lack of planning can easily lead to higher calorie, lower nutrient snacking instead of a meal.

**Make a list:** Take some time on a quiet evening to develop a list of options that your family likes to eat for lunch. Get individual suggestions and ideas from each person.

**Stock the staples:** Use the list to shop for necessary ingredients. Stock the freezer, fridge, and cupboard with items like frozen veggies, cheese sticks, and canned tuna.

**Rely on planned-overs:** Whenever you cook a favorite item for dinner, make extra. Freeze single servings for a quick, easy lunch when you are pressed for time.

### EAT

**Fruits & vegetables:** Nutrient-rich lunches start with brightly colored fruits and veggies. Try to fill about half your plate or bowl with produce - in the form of green salads with dried fruit, sliced fresh fruit, vegetable soup, or leftover cooked veggies.

**Whole grains & legumes:** These foods offer fiber and long-lasting carbohydrates. Enjoy sandwiches on whole grain breads or whole grain crackers with a large salad. Beans and peas (aka legumes) are great in soups, burritos, and salads.

**Lean protein & low-fat dairy:** A serving from these groups will provide enough satisfying protein to help you go strong until dinnertime. That's about 3-oz. lean meat, fish, poultry, or nuts in a sandwich or salad, along with 8-oz. milk or 1-oz. cheese.

### ENJOY

Take time to sit and enjoy your lunch. Put down your work and turn off the TV. When you pay attention to food and savor the flavors in every bite, you may eat less, especially if you also listen to your stomach and stop when you are satisfied.



## Split Pea Soup

### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups dried green split peas
- 1 cup chopped lean ham
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped or shredded carrots
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 cups water

### Instructions:

- 1) Add all ingredients to a large pot.
- 2) Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer
- 3) Cover and simmer 1 ½ hours or until peas are tender.

### SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS:

Combine all ingredients in a slow cooker and cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours.

**YIELD: 6 servings**

- Serve with a whole grain roll, a glass of low-fat milk and a tossed green salad.
- Offer Tabasco sauce for those who might like a little 'kick' to their soup.

### Getting kids cooking:

- Kids can help rinse the split peas.
- Kids can help measure and add the ingredients.
- Kids can help stir the mixture before cooking.

### Nutrition Analysis

Serving: 1 cup	Total Carb: 35.2 g
Calories: 219	Dietary Fiber: 13.6 g
Total Fat: 1.7 g	Sodium: 660 mg
Calories from Fat: 7%	Protein: 16.8 g
Saturated Fat: 0.4 g	Calcium: 50 mg
Trans Fat: 0 g	Iron: 2.6 mg

### Source:

MT SNAP-ED Program

(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

[www.msuextension.org/nep/recipes.html](http://www.msuextension.org/nep/recipes.html)

## GARDENING for Fun and Food

Getting down and dirty in a garden can help you grow nutrient-rich produce for your family and help everyone grow a healthier body at the same time. Add the stress-reducing benefits of fresh air and sunshine - and you've got a win-win-win with fun, fitness, and great-tasting produce from one activity. With young kids, keep the garden space small and expect less than 'perfect' plantings. Children love to play in the dirt, so don't worry about keeping rows straight and tidy.

### PLAN

**A container garden:** This can be as simple as an indoor window box or a few large buckets on a porch or patio. Tomatoes, lettuce, and herbs grow great in containers.

**A backyard garden:** If you have more space, you can divide it up and let kids have their own special areas. Peas, beans, carrots, and summer squash are easy for kids.

**A community garden:** Many schools, churches, and communities have garden plots available for free or for a small rental fee. Some have special family programs.

### PLAY

Here's a short list of ways to turn garden activities into active fun for children. If you show them that you are having fun, they will enjoy just about anything you do.

- 1. Rake leaves:** In the garden or on the lawn, piles of leaves are fun for jumping.
- 2. Build a compost pile:** Kids are fascinated by turning garbage into soil.
- 3. Prepare the soil:** Outdoors or in a container, it's lots of fun to mix stuff together.
- 4. Hoe the rows:** Once everything is mixed, it's time to get ready for planting.
- 5. Bike to the garden center:** Use pedal power to go pick out your seeds.
- 6. Walk around a greenhouse:** Stroll around to pick out seedlings or flowers.
- 7. Dig some holes:** Used serving spoons and spatulas make great tools for kids.
- 8. Water the plants:** Moving hoses and carrying buckets is really fun on hot days.
- 9. Pull the weeds:** Children quickly learn which plants stay and which should go.
- 10. Pick the produce:** Definitely the best part of gardening!!

### ENJOY

Make it fun, do it together! Whether you garden indoors or out, in the back yard or at a community space, the important thing is spending active, TV-free time together!!

## Getting Kids to Eat Vegetables

Many adults have terrible memories of being forced to eat vegetables as children. Many parents dread 'food fights' over veggies with their own children at the dinner table. While it is important for kids to eat more vegetables, there is a kinder, gentler, and more successful way to approach the issue. Here's how to avoid fights about vegetables and get children to actually enjoy eating their vegetables.

### What we know

Given the importance of vegetables for health and nutrition, there has been a significant amount of research on children and their vegetable intake.

**Children are not eating enough produce:** Children's average vegetable consumption is far below recommended levels and has actually fallen over the past five years. Kids especially need to eat more dark green and orange vegetables.

**Children are neo-phobic about foods:** *Neo-phobic* is another way of saying that kids are naturally suspicious of new foods and often reluctant to even touch them. Some children are more reluctant than others; some react strongly to new textures as well.

**Children need positive role models:** Children are always watching what those around them are eating. When parents, grandparents, caregivers, and other children enjoy their veggies, kids tend to be more interested in trying them.

### What you can do

#### Serve a variety of vegetables in a variety of ways.

- Since children may need to see a new food many times before they want to even taste it, serving veggies often helps kids get familiar with how they look and smell.
- Veggies can be prepared in many ways - raw, steamed, stir-fried, roasted, baked, and grilled. Kids who won't touch cooked spinach might love a baby spinach salad.

#### Be a vegetable role model for children.

- The simplest, most effective way to get kids to eat their veggies is to eat yours. While this may not have an immediate effect, over time it will help kids eat a variety of food.
- Gardening is a great way to get kids more interested in vegetables. They are usually more willing to try garden fresh items - often before they make it to the dinner table.

#### Refrain from forcing or bribing children to eat any food.

- Forcing or bribing children to eat veggies (or any other food) often makes them more suspicious of that item. They actually tend to eat less of the food in these situations.
- The best approach is a matter of fact one: *This is the tasty vegetable we are serving for this meal. It tastes great - and I hope that you will enjoy eating it like I am.*