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March 2007

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 3rd issue of our 2007 campaign on ***Eating Together, Playing Together***. This month's packet coordinates ERM information with the theme of **National Nutrition Month® 2007: 100% Fad Free**. The nutrition handout and press release focus on five simple ways to **eat for a healthy weight** – while avoiding the downsides of diet fads. Our activity handout outlines **five fun ways to walk toward fitness**.

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association (ADA). Many additional resources can be found on the ADA website at www.eatright.org/nnm/. Several of the 2007 key messages dovetail perfectly with those that are promoted by ERM packet.

- **Develop an eating plan for lifelong health.** Too often people adopt the latest food fad rather than focusing on overall health. Get back to basics and use the Dietary Guidelines 2005 and *MyPyramid* as your guide to healthy eating.
- **Choose foods sensibly by looking at the big picture.** A single food or meal doesn't make or break a healthful diet. When consumed in moderation in the appropriate portion size, all foods can fit. "Right-sizing" typical portions is key!
- **Learn how to spot a food fad.** Unreasonable or exaggerated claims that eating (or not eating) specific foods, nutrient supplements or combinations of foods may cure disease or offer quick weight loss are key features of fad diets.
- **Find your balance between food and physical activity.** Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness plus it helps control body weight, promotes a feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.

Our colleagues north of the border also celebrate **Nutrition Month®** in March. Dietitians of Canada are promoting ***Cook It Up Healthy*** as part of **Eat Well Be Well**. Their website has some fun features; all based on Canada's recently updated *Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. Take a few minutes to check out the consumer-friendly sections like **Let's Make A Meal**, **Virtual Kitchen**, and **Virtual Grocery Store** (also in French!). www.dietitians.ca/public/content/eat_well_live_well/english/nutritionmonth/

Healthy Families packets are made possible with the generous support of agencies, organizations, and individuals. Please join us in thanking the 2007 sponsors listed on the left. If you utilize this information and can make a donation to support positive, practical messages for families, please contact ERM Chair Katie Bark at 406-994-5641 or kbark@mt.gov

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Rebekah Brown 406-994-2926 **Crystelle Fogle** 406-947-2344
Katie Bark 406-994-5641

Five Fun Ways to Walk Your Way to Fitness



A daily walk is a wonderful way to maintain a healthy weight. A 30-45 minute walk can help to lower your stress level, improve your mood, boost your immune system, and reduce your risk of disease.

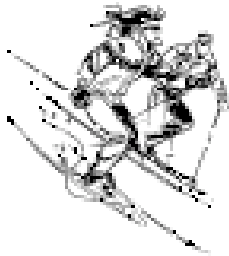
★ Walk and talk.

Walking and talking with a friend is good for your body, good for your heart, and good for your soul. **Walking and talking with children or grandchildren is an active way to spend some quality time together.** It can also be a time to discuss serious issues, like school or grades, in a less threatening atmosphere.



★ Walk and listen.

Music lightens every step – and it seems to make time go faster. **Pick your favorite tunes, pick up the pace, and sing along if you want!** Walking and listening to books “on tape” is another fun way to add extra value to your daily walk. Language tapes, CDs, or Podcasts also make ideal walking companions.

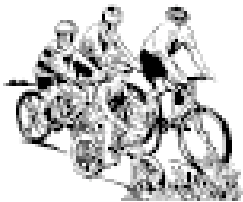


★ Walk and learn.

A new language is just one of the many things you can learn on a walk. **With kids, you can count different colored cars, talk about how plants change with the season, or listen for new sounds.** Wherever you walk outdoors, there are birds to learn about. Perhaps it’s time to start a list of feathered friends.

★ Walk and shop.

Using your legs for transportation is a simple way to accomplish two things at the same time. **Put on a backpack for your purchases – and walk to the grocery store, walk to the post office, or walk to the mall.** If you live too far to walk all the way from home, drive to a central location and walk from there.



★ Walk and enjoy.

Enjoyment is the key to success for all fitness activities – because, over the long haul, you’ll only stick with what you like to do. Some people enjoy doing the same walk every day, while others want a different route every time they go out. **Think about what kind of walk really gets you going – and just do it!**



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

a coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

Five Easy Ways to Eat for a Healthy Weight

The lure of quick weight loss is hard to resist, especially when you see 'magical' results on TV and in magazine ads. In reality, many diets and weight loss products are expensive, empty promises. For real weight management success:

❶ Forget the fads.

Diet fads come and go – without offering a permanent weight solution. **When you hear about the latest diet, always ask yourself a few important questions:** Do the results sound too good to be true? Is there any proof besides a few personal testimonials? Can I really eat this way for the rest of my life?

❷ Make a realistic commitment.

Any eating plan needs to work for you. It needs to fit with your schedule, food budget, and cooking skills. **If a diet is complicated, expensive, or eliminates all your favorite foods, you won't stick with it.** Once you have a realistic plan, share your commitment to make healthier food choices with your family.

❸ Start slowly and make it a habit.

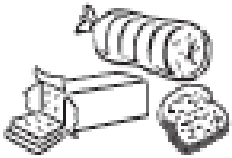
Drastic changes can be a recipe for failure; small changes can make a big difference, if they last. Pick one change, like eating breakfast, and make it a habit. Experts say that it takes about 21 days for a behavior to become habit. To start a breakfast habit, write down 21 breakfast 'menus' you'd love to eat.

❹ Plan ahead and stock up on options.

Make a list of the possibilities – like all the breakfast foods you enjoy: at home; in the car or on the bus; at work; or from a vending machine. **Once you have a list of healthful possibilities, stock up.** Make sure that there is a smart option anywhere that you might have the opportunity to eat breakfast.

❺ Forgive your lapses and celebrate your successes.

Healthy eating doesn't have to be perfect eating. If you make a mistake – like missing a few morning meals, no biggie. Get back on track as soon as you can! Changing eating habits takes a bit of time. Just think how long you've had your current habits – and give yourself a pat on the back for any positive changes.





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Crystelle Fogle, MBA, RD 406.947.2344
MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

EATING TOGETHER, PLAYING TOGETHER
Celebrating Healthy Families 2007

March 1, 2007

Real-Life Weight Management – 100% Fad Free

Fad diets are everywhere. Turn on the TV – and there’s the latest super-pill ‘guaranteed’ to make you slim and sexy for just \$39.95 (or so) per month. Log onto your computer screen – and the pop-ups offer dozens of products to ‘detoxify’ your life and shed pounds miraculously. Glance at the magazines covers in the checkout line – and every celebrity in America has a new diet plan to give you a perfect body just like theirs (right!). Flip through those same magazine pages – and the (allegedly) before-and-after photos promote quick answers to all your weight loss dreams.

“Americans spend more than \$40 billion on weight loss every year,” says Christine Emerson, MS, RD (registered dietitian) and president of the Montana Dietetic Association. “Sadly, many people waste their hard-earned dollars on fad diets, weight-loss gimmicks, and modern day snake oil. At best these products don’t work; in the worst case scenario, they can harm your health.”

There is no doubt that Montanans, young and old, are increasingly overweight. Recent surveys suggest that 57 percent of the state’s adults are overweight or obese. Programs in Billings and Missoula have documented that about one-third of preschool and elementary-aged children are already overweight or at risk of becoming so. These trends are certainly troubling, since being overweight can increase the risk of serious medical issues, like type 2 diabetes and joint problems.

However, the path to a healthy weight – for children and adults – is never a short-term diet. “The real solution is to make healthful eating and physical activity an everyday way of life,” says Emerson, who manages School Nutrition Programs for the Office of Public Instruction in Helena. “The key to success is to ignore all the misleading weight loss promotions – and focus on taking permanent steps toward a healthy lifestyle for your whole family.”

To celebrate National Nutrition Month® 2007, Eat Right Montana (ERM) encourages families to go **100% Fad-Free** and to focus on proven, science-based approaches to a healthy weight. These simple steps to real-life weight management have been the focus of ERM materials since 1999. All past and current issues of ERM’s monthly Healthy Families packets can be downloaded free from their updated web site at www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm

To evaluate a diet product, service, treatment or device, you can start with the following questions (adapted from *The American Dietetic Association’s Complete Food and Nutrition Guide*, Wiley 2006). If your answer to any of these questions is “Yes,” it means that you should be suspicious. The claims are likely too good to be true – and you should probably steer clear of the product.

- Does it use scare tactics or emotional appeals rather than proven results?
- Does it use non-scientific terms like “revitalize,” “detoxify” or “balance your body with nature”?
- Does it offer “proof” based on personal testimonials rather than sound science?
- Does it claim to also “treat” or “cure” health problems, like cancer to sexual impotence?
- Does it mention a “secret formula” or fail to list ingredients or possible side effects on the label?

For ways to avoid diet traps – and some tasty recipes, visit ADA online at www.eatright.org/nnm/