

February 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Valentine's Day and welcome to the second issue of our 2008 theme ~ It's All About Balance: Eat Smart, Play Hard, Rest Well. We appreciate your positive responses to our new look -- and are very excited to share this February newsletter with you. In this issue, we focus on the benefits of breakfast and sleep with a healthy eating handout on **Better Breakfast Bites** and an active lifestyle handout on **Getting a Better Night's Sleep**. Our delightful February recipe-of-the-month is **Light-as-a-Feather Whole Wheat Pancakes**, courtesy of the Wheat Foods Council: www.wheatfoods.org

A widely reported British study (University of Cambridge and Norfolk County Medical Research Council) recently concluded that a few simple lifestyle changes can add as much as 14 years to a lifespan. Although they were not included in this specific study, two other habits have also been getting significant scientific attention. Both of them - eating well in the morning and sleeping well at night - have been at the top of every mother's list for decades. While the advice continues to be right on target for children, it also turns out that eating balanced breakfasts and getting enough sleep are equally important for **adult** health. Both habits have been linked to reducing the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

This month's press release and healthy eating handout concentrate on the benefits of breakfast for adults and families. For more about the importance of breakfast for children and schools, visit: www.nutritionexplorations.org/parents/breakfast-first.asp This National Dairy Council page has many links to breakfast charts, games, recipes, and tips.

For more information about sleep for tired folks of all ages, we suggest the National Sleep Foundation Web site at www.sleepfoundation.org/ which covers everything sleep related - from A to Zzzzzz! There are lots of free resources (quizzes, tip sheets, poll/survey results, and tools, like a caffeine calculator), along with materials to promote National Sleep Awareness Week® (March 3-9, 2008) and the National Sleep Challenge (March 3-31, 2008).

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions about our **Healthy Families 2008** packets. Although we have a general outline for each packet (and twelve pretested recipes), we are eager to incorporate your input whenever possible. Just send your thoughts along to **Dayle Hayes** at EatRightMT2000@gmail.com - and remember: Past issues of **Healthy Families** and other ERM materials are always available at www.eatrightmontana.org/

Healthy Families packets are made possible with generous support from agencies, organizations, and individuals. Please join us in thanking the 2007 sponsors listed on the right. If you use this packet 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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It's All About Balance | Celebrating Healthy Families 2008

4 Restful Ways to Enjoy a Better Night's Sleep

Sleep is one of the most important - but too often neglected - aspects of a healthy lifestyle. When Shakespeare's Macbeth called sleep "chief nourisher of life's feast," he was certainly providing some sound advice. Many surveys indicate that Americans are not getting enough sleep, which may contribute to a number of problems. Too little sleep has been linked to overeating and overweight, increased risk of diabetes and heart problems, decreased attention span, poorer grades in school, and more depression. For overall health and well-being, as well as success at work and school, a good night's sleep (7 to 8 hours for adults, more for children) is essential for good health.

Create a sleep-friendly space.

A bedroom should be conducive to restful sleep - cool, dark, comfortable, uncluttered, and free of interruptions. Blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, humidifiers, fans and other "white noise" devices can all help make your sleep space as quiet as possible. You can help by putting televisions and computers into another room. Mattresses and pillows should be comfortable and supportive. If yours are more than 9 to 10 years old, they have probably exceeded their life expectancy.

Maintain a regular schedule.

If you want to fall asleep easily and wake up refreshed, it is important to keep your bedtimes and wake-times as regular as possible, even on weekends. This helps to set your internal "circadian" clock or sleep-wake cycle. Regular physical activity can also help you sleep well. For most people, it is better to be active during the day - like in the late afternoon, rather than right before bedtime. Meal time is critical too. It is usually best to finish eating 2 to 3 hours before going to bed.

Rethink your daily drinks.

Alcoholic beverages, and those with caffeine, can seriously affect sleep patterns and nighttime wakefulness. Although we often think of alcohol as a sedative (something to make us sleepy), it actually disrupts sleep. Since drinking alcohol leads to less restful sleep, avoid alcohol close to bedtime. Caffeine is a strong stimulant - increasing alertness and disrupting deep sleep. For a better night's sleep, avoid caffeine for 6 to 8 hours before bedtime. For an easy caffeine calculator, go to www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.hulXKjM0lxF/b.2419103/k.DEFA/Caffeine_Calculator.htm

Get into a relaxing bedtime routine.

Smart parents know that a regular bedtime routine - warm bath, reading a story, and cuddling a favorite toy - is the best way to get children settled down and ready to sleep through the night. The same concept works equally well for adults - a relaxing, soothing routine that lets your body and brain know that it is time for sleep. Turn the lights down low and enjoy a soak in the bath or a hot tub. Listen to some soothing music and read something light and enjoyable.

THINK SLEEP for DRIVING SAFELY: According to www.DrowsingDriving.org, "Sleepiness and driving is a dangerous combination. Most people are aware of the dangers of drinking and driving but don't realize that drowsy driving can be just as fatal." Driving while drowsy can lead to impaired reaction time, judgment, and vision, as well as problems with processing information and increased aggressive behavior. Always get a good night's sleep - so you can drive safely for everyone.

4 Tasty Ways to Enjoy Better Breakfast Bites

Based on modern science (and the wisdom of mothers through the ages), breakfast is definitely a very important meal. Research shows that breaking your overnight fast with a balanced meal can make a major difference in your overall health and well-being. Eating a smart breakfast can help improve your attitude, enhance work or school performance, foster a healthy weight, and lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. On the other hand, skipping breakfast is a no-brainer – literally. Skip breakfast – and your brain and body suffer all day. Here’s how to eat well in the morning and get started on the nutrition fast track to a high-energy, health-smart day.

Start with some powerful protein.

The missing link in many morning meals, protein is what you need to go strong and stay focused until lunch. Go lean with protein – a slice or two of Canadian bacon, an egg, some smoked salmon, a slice of deli meat or cheese, a container of yogurt, a scoop of cottage cheese, or leftover meat from the night before. Think outside of the breakfast box - microwave a quesadilla on a whole wheat tortilla with black beans or enjoy a tofu scrambler with chopped veggies and grated cheese.

Add in longer-lasting whole grains.

A high-octane carbohydrate will help energize your body and brain for a busy day. Choose whole grains for an extra nutrition punch. They have more fiber and more antioxidants, plus they tend to digest more slowly and provide longer lasting energy. Go inside the cereal box for hot (especially oatmeal and multi-grain) or cold varieties. Whole grain breads, muffins, waffles, pancakes, rolls, tortillas, or even pastas can also help you rise, shine, and rev up your metabolism.

Get fresh with fruits (or veggies).

Breakfast is a perfect time to enjoy the produce your body needs for optimal health. Go with fresh fruit - bananas, kiwi, pears, apples, mangoes, melon, oranges, grapefruit, or whatever is in season! Canned (pineapple or mandarin oranges) and frozen (blueberries and strawberries) can be used in yogurt parfaits and mixed fruit salads. Dried fruit is delicious on a bowl of cereal or in a bag of trail mix. How about chopped vegetables in an omelet or a refreshing glass of veggie juice? Looking for more ideas, check out www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/

Rethink your morning drinks.

Some of us can’t seem to get going without that morning cup of coffee - or that triple, extra whipped, tall mocha! While a moderate amount of caffeine is probably fine for most healthy adults (except pregnant women), many Americans are getting lots of extra calories from fancy coffee drinks. Non-fat or 1% milk is a very smart choice - plain or blended into a smoothie, shake, or latte. Concerned about caffeine overload? Switch to decaf, herbal tea, or lower-caffeine green tea.

What about breakfast bars? So-called “energy bars” are everywhere and the packages are filled with nutrition promises – to replace meals, boost energy levels, promote weight loss, and pump up your intake of protein, vitamins, and minerals. There’s no magic ‘pep’ in these bars. The energy is from calories, just like other foods. Some are no more than ‘souped-up’ candy bars, with lots of fat, saturated fat, and sugar. **Choose bars with 10-15 grams of protein and at least 3 grams fiber.**



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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

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Breakfast Makeover Offers Major Benefits

Taking a few minutes to focus on your morning meal can really make a difference in your day. With the right nutritional kick start, you'll feel better - and think better all day long. Smart breakfast choices also offer some serious long-term health benefits. Recent studies confirm that eating breakfast helps ward off weight gain and prevent heart disease too.

"A smart breakfast is the perfect way to celebrate heart events in February," says Jessica Grennan, State Health Alliances Director for the American Heart Association in Montana. "**American Heart Month** and **National Wear Red Day** (Friday, February 1, www.goredforwomen.org/) are designed to raise awareness of heart disease and stroke risk factors - and simple steps to reduce them. In fact, eating a balanced breakfast is one of the tastiest ways to improve your heart health."

Recent research has confirmed the benefits of breakfast for men, women, and children. A daily bowl of whole grain cereal has been shown to help women maintain a healthy weight and to reduce the risk of heart failure in men. Based on several new studies, eggs may be back on the breakfast menu too! Healthy adults (with no history of diabetes) can enjoy one to two eggs per day without increasing their blood cholesterol or triglyceride levels. People who eat protein, like eggs, for breakfast tend to eat fewer calories during the day and to maintain a healthier weight. They also report feeling more energetic than those who just eat carbohydrates, like a pastry, some toast, or bagel.

Most Americans - 80 to 90% in national surveys - believe that eating breakfast is a healthy habit. "However, only 40 to 50% of adults are actually eating breakfast on a regular basis," says Grennan. "For most of us, time is reported to be the biggest obstacle to eating in the morning. Fortunately, there are lots of really easy ways to beat the breakfast rush hour."

Here are three tried-and-true tips to help you to fit a Montana breakfast into your morning routine:

- **GET ORGANIZED THE NIGHT BEFORE:** Make a family breakfast plan as you clean up from dinner. Set the table with bowls and spoons for cereal. Slice up your favorite fruit and cheese. Get out a pan for pancakes or a blender for smoothies. Prepare the pancake batter or muffin mix, so it is all ready to cook in the morning.
- **KEEP BREAKFAST REAL SIMPLE:** Fancy breakfasts are wonderful when you have time. On busy days, rev up your metabolism with something as quick as a bowl of whole grain cereal with a banana or a slice of leftover pizza. Speaking of leftovers, nothing could be simpler than a sandwich made with a slice of meat from dinner and a piece of cheese.
- **PACK YOUR BREAKFAST TO-GO:** If there's no time to eat at home, take your nutrition-to-go for a 'desk-fast' at work. Save time (and money) by packing both a brown-bag breakfast and lunch the night before. Busy teens can grab a banana, a bag of trail mix, and a carton (or plastic bottle) of milk. Check out the breakfast options available for kids at school too.

"In a recent British study, skipping breakfast for just two weeks led to higher levels of artery-clogging LDL-cholesterol," notes Ms. Grennan. "Be good to your heart, as well as your brain and waistline, and enjoy a smart breakfast every day."

Past and current issues of Eat Right Montana's monthly packets can be downloaded for free at

www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm



Light-as-a-Feather Whole Wheat Pancakes

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/3 cups buttermilk
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon oil

Instructions:

- 1) Preheat griddle.
- 2) In a medium bowl, stir or sift dry ingredients together.
- 3) Beat egg, buttermilk, brown sugar, and oil together.
- 4) Stir buttermilk mixture into dry ingredients until just moist (batter should be slightly lumpy).
- 5) Pour 1/4 cup batter for each cake onto a lightly greased, hot griddle.
- 6) Flip cakes when bubbles appear on surface - turn only once.

Yield: 12 - 4 inch pancakes

Ideas/Substitutions

- Top with your favorite fruit.
- Serve with hot, chunky, spiced applesauce or thick fruit sauce instead of syrup.
- Add 1/2 cup fresh or frozen blueberries to the batter for delicious blueberry pancakes.
- Can't find buttermilk? Try these substitutes for 1 1/3 cups buttermilk:
1 1/3 cup plain yogurt OR 1 1/3 cup milk plus 4 teaspoons vinegar or lemon juice (let stand 10 minutes before using)

Nutrition Analysis

Serving Size: 3 (4") cakes

Calories: 234

Total Fat: 6 g

Calories from Fat: 16%

Saturated Fat: 0 g

Trans Fat: 0 g

Total Carb: 12 g

Dietary Fiber: 6 g

Sodium: 534 mg

Protein: 9 g

Folate: 27 mcg

Iron: 3 mg

Recipe Source

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Courtesy of the Wheat Foods Council

www.wheatfoods.org