



**October 1, 2000**

**Dear Eat Right Montana Friend:**

The next two months of Eat Right Montana's **Celebrating Healthy Families 2000** campaign will focus on teens - AKA as *Generation Y*. We will start with adolescent girls this month and then continue with teen boys in November.

When it comes to the eating patterns and fitness habits of teenagers, there is not much good news to report. **American adolescents are eating more fat and less fruit. They are drinking more soft drinks and less milk. They are dieting more and walking less.** Health professionals are alarmed about the increases in both obesity and eating disorders among young people.

Teenage girls have an especially difficult time when it comes to nutrition and weight control issues. Because of the intense pressure to be thin, young women often avoid foods with the very nutrients their bodies crave. Dairy products and protein foods (e.g., meat, eggs and nuts) are seen as fattening enemies rather than as delicious sources of calcium, iron, zinc and protein.

For more about teen nutrition issues and eating problems, check out:

- **KidsHealth.org for Teens** @ <http://kidshealth.org/teen/nutrition>  
Award-winning site with solid info; may be a bit tame for savvy cyber-teens.
- **Nutrition On the Web** @ <http://library.thinkquest.org/10991/>  
Created by teens, for teens; good but needs editing for inaccuracies.
- **Health Behavior of School Children** @ <http://www.ruhbc.ed.ac.uk/hbsc/>  
World Health Organizations offers an international view of children's health.
- **MT Eating Disorders** @ <http://www.montana.edu/eatingdisorders/>  
MSU Partnership for Eating Disorder Prevention provides links & resources.

Thanks, as always, for your efforts. Please call with any questions.

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# What's Up with Teen Girls and Weight?

- **The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) warns doctors, coaches and parents that young female athletes should be monitored to avoid serious damage to their bones and reproductive systems.** In a study of young elite swimmers, more than 60 percent of average weight girls and nearly 18 percent of underweight girls were trying to lose weight. Inadequate food intake can disrupt the reproductive system and reduce estrogen levels - increasing the risk of stress fractures and osteoporosis later in life. **American Academy of Pediatrics @ <http://www.aap.org>**
- **There is a large gap between recommended levels of calcium and actual calcium intake, especially among adolescent girls.** AAP recommends calcium intakes of 1200 to 1500 milligrams, and notes that most teen girls only get about half of this. They attribute the problem to the preoccupation with thinness and misconceptions about the calories in dairy foods. **AAP @ <http://www.aap.org/policy/re9904.html>**
- **A British study, funded by the UK Department of Health, found that one in four London schoolgirls were damaging their IQ levels by dieting and depriving themselves of iron.** The researchers were surprised that small drops in iron levels had such dramatic effects on IQ levels. **The Nutrition Society @ <http://www.nutsoc.org.uk/>**
- **According to a World Health Organization (WHO) survey of more than 120,000 students, US adolescents are less likely to exercise and eat well than teens in twenty-seven other countries.** American girls are also more likely to be on a diet or to feel that they should be losing weight. **WHO @ <http://www.ruhbc.ed.ac.uk/hbsc/>**
- **In a California study of teenage girls, their weight-reduction efforts were more likely to result in weight gain than in weight loss.** During the four-year study, those who reported using appetite suppressants and/or laxatives, self-induced vomiting, and binge eating were more likely to gain weight over time. **Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology @ <http://www.apa.org/journals/ccp/ccp676967.html>**

Provided by Eat Right Montana



## **Nutrition for Teen Girls: Looking good and staying strong**

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### **Healthy Families 2000: Food and fitness for Generation Y (10<sup>th</sup> in a series)**

It's a tough time to be a teenager in America. Today's Gen Yers are faced with dozens of crucial decisions every day – choices that can seriously affect their lives, health and well-being. All across Montana, teens have to deal with issues like drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, and violence on a daily basis.

“Nutrition is another important health issue that affects teens,” says Lynn Paul, PhD, RD (Registered Dietitian), with MSU Extension Service in Bozeman and leader in a statewide Eating Disorders Awareness Project. “When it comes to making food choices, teens face enormous pressures – from media messages, food advertisements, their peers and worried parents. Young women have an especially difficult time because they are constantly bombarded with unrealistic images of body size and beauty.”

Adolescent girls feel constant pressure to be unnaturally thin – in order look “hot” and be “cool” with their friends. Montana surveys indicate that 61 percent of high school girls are trying to lose weight and that eight percent make themselves vomit and/or take laxatives in order to lose weight.

According to Paul, these destructive habits, extreme eating patterns, and fad diets have both short and long term effects on girls' health. “Like their counterparts across the US, many Montana adolescents are seriously deficient in vital nutrients like iron and calcium,” she explains. Insufficient iron intake can cause anemia, fatigue, and, based on a recent British study, may even lead to a decrease in IQ scores.

Low intakes of calcium and calories put teen girls at risk for stress fractures, other sports injuries, and menstrual irregularities. These eating patterns also make them more prone to osteoporosis later in life.

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges parents, teachers, coaches and youth leaders to help Montana teens face their nutrition challenges. Teenagers need positive role models, accurate information, and new skills to make healthy choices.

“We know that teens do not want a lecture about nutrition,” says Dr. Paul. “They want realistic tips on high-energy choices for on-the-go lives. The good news is that eating smart is as simple as grabbing left-over pizza and juice for breakfast – or switching from pop to a milkshake in the drive-thru lane.”

**ATTACHED: *"Savvy Teens Eat Smart" "Helping a Friend with Eating Problems"***

# Savvy Teens Eat Smart

Four tasty ways to get the nutrients your body craves

## **BE REALISTIC:** Make small changes over time.

- ☺ Feeling bad that your body doesn't look like the models in the magazines? Dump those unrealistic, unhealthy body images. Focus on being the best **YOU** can be with smart choices from all the layers of the Food Guide Pyramid.
- ☺ Make the switch from soft drinks to a beverage with a real health kick. Try replacing one soft drink a day with a tall refreshing glass of pure fruit juice. Or, for that cool mustache look, guzzle a glass of fat-free, bone-building milk.

## **BE FLEXIBLE:** Balance food and physical activity.

- ☺ Planning a blowout pizza party with friends? No problem! Enjoy every slice, and then go a little lighter with lower fat options tomorrow. While you're at it, experiment with tasty pizza toppings like taco meat, grilled veggies, or pineapple.
- ☺ For a winning performance at your next game or race, fuel your body with the carbo. Dig into lots of high-octane breads and cereals every day. Try bagels, muffins, toaster waffles, breadsticks, microwave pretzels, rolls and crackers.

## **BE ADVENTUROUS:** Expand your tastes.

- ☺ Satisfy your sweet tooth with naturally delicious, nutrient-rich fruit. Slice a banana into your morning cereal, munch a bunch of grapes at lunch, crunch on carrots for snack, or chill out with frozen yogurt topped with berries.
- ☺ Lean beef is perfect for eating on the run. Enjoy a power lunch with **ZIP** (zinc, iron and protein) by rolling a slice of roast beef and cheese into a tortilla wrap. Grab a soft taco with beef, beans, cheese, and salsa for spicy nutrition-to-go.

## **BE SENSIBLE:** Enjoy all foods, just don't overdo.

- ☺ Breakfast is a meal that can really help you make the grade at school or in sports. It can also improve your attitude, rev your metabolism, and kick your day into high gear. Start the day right with a sandwich, a fruit smoothie or leftover pizza.
- ☺ Indulge your body's need for nutrients with power snacks that really count. Feed your next snack attack with a PB and banana sandwich, an English muffin with melted mozzarella, or a roast beef sandwich on whole wheat.



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*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*

# How to help a friend with eating, weight or body image problems

- ✓ If you are reading this, you are probably concerned about the eating habits, weight, or body image of someone you care about. This can be a difficult and scary situation for you, but you are definitely doing the right thing by looking for more information.
- ✓ This list may not tell you everything you need to know about what to do in your exact situation, but it will give you some general ideas on what to do to help your friend.
- ✓ Learn as much as you can about eating problems. Read books, articles, and brochures. Check out web sites like: [www.somethingfishy.org/](http://www.somethingfishy.org/)
- ✓ Know the differences between facts and fiction when it comes to dieting, weight loss, nutrition, and exercise. Knowing the facts will help you talk about the myths that your friend may be using as excuses to maintain disordered eating patterns.
- ✓ Be honest. Talk openly and candidly about your concerns with the person who is struggling with eating or body image problems. Avoiding it or ignoring it won't help!
- ✓ Be caring, but firm. Caring about someone does not mean allowing yourself to be manipulated. Everyone is responsible for their own actions and the consequences. Avoid making "rules" or promises that you cannot or will not keep – like "I promise not to tell anyone" or, "If you do this one more time, I'll never talk to you again."
- ✓ Tell someone. It may seem difficult to know when to tell someone else about your concerns. Talking about body image or eating problems in the early stages offers your friend the best chance for working through these issues and becoming healthy again. Don't wait until the situation is so bad that someone's life is in danger.
- ✓ If you have already spoken with your friend and still feel like more steps need to be taken to address these issues, consider telling a parent, teacher, doctor, counselor, nutritionist, or any trusted adult. Your friend needs support and understanding from an adult who can get the necessary help.
- ✓ Remember: You cannot force someone to seek help, change their habits, or adjust their attitudes. You can help by honestly sharing your concerns, providing support, and knowing where to go for more information! People struggling with eating and body image problems need professional help. There is help, and there is hope!

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Adapted by Eat Right Montana from a handout produced by Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention, Inc. For more information contact EDAP at: 603 Stewart St., Suite 803, Seattle, WA 98101, 1-800-931-2237, <http://www.edap.org>

# Healthy Families 2000:

## Food and Fitness for a Lifetime

**January 2000**

**Pregnancy: Getting a healthy start on a new life**

**February 2000**

**Infants: Introducing new foods at the right time**

**March 2000**

**Toddlers: Learning to eat “by myself”**

**April 2000**

**School kids: Growing strong, playing hard and learning well**

**May 2000**

**Moms: Maximizing energy levels for on-the-go lifestyles**

**June 2000**

**Dads: Winning at the food and fitness game**

**July 2000**

**Newlyweds: Setting up a kitchen with health in mind**

**August 2000**

**College students: Staying healthy while studying hard**

**September 2000**

**Grandparents: Enjoying good health in the golden years**

**October 2000**

**Teen girls: Looking good and staying strong**

**November 2000**

**Teen boys: Eating well in the fast food lane**

**December 2000**

**Whole family health: Choosing food and fitness for a lifetime**



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