EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles

www.eatrightmontana.org

December 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Holidays and welcome to the final issue of our 2008 campaign *It's All About Balance: Eat Smart, Play Hard, Rest Well*. In our annual holiday packet, we suggest gifts for health and happiness - with smart ways to **Enjoy the Gift of Vitamin D**, along with energizing ways to the **Share the Gift of Fitness**. Our media release is all about the joy of **Made in Montana** presents, while the recipe page features tips on **Healthful, Heartfelt Holiday Gifts**.

Katie Bark and I recently attended a Washington, DC, Dairy Science Forum (thanks to Eat Right Montana's partner, Western Dairy Association). As part of the ***New Conversation About Dairy***, we heard outstanding presentations on consumer trends, vitamin D, protein, dairy minerals (calcium, potassium, and magnesium), and the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) trials. Here are a few major points with links to in-depth information.

Consumer Insights: A majority of those in a recent survey (52%) said that they need more practical tips to help them eat right. For more insights from two decades of surveys, go to:

> **American Dietetic Association - Nutrition and You: Trends 2008 Survey**
> www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/media_18649_ENU_HTML.htm

Vitamin D: Many Americans (30-55%, depending on age and other factors) are D-deficient, especially at the end of the winter. See handout on page 3 and website below for more info:

> **Dr. Michael Holick - Vitamin D for Health**
> www.vitamindhealth.org/

DASH Diet: Eating patterns that increase dairy, fruits, and vegetables offer health benefits, such as lower blood pressure, to both children and adults. For recipes and details, visit:

> **DASH Diet Eating Plan (Oregon Dairy Council)**
> www.dashdietoregon.org/

As always, we welcome your comments about **Healthy Families**. In January 2009, we will roll out our exciting new theme - **it's all about GOING GREEN and what that means for your family**. Send suggestions, anytime, to me at EatRightMT2000@gmail.com - and remember: several years of **Healthy Families** packets, as well as other Eat Right Montana materials are available at www.eatrightmontana.org/. Best wishes for delicious holidays,

Dayle Hayes, MS, RD

Healthy Families packets are made possible with generous support from agencies, organizations, and individuals. Please join us in thanking the 2008 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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8 Energizing Gifts to Share the Joy of Fitness

The best gift is often one that you would most like to receive yourself. With active gifts, you can add even more to the enjoyment by actually sharing your present with those you love. When you enjoy physical activity together, you'll be sharing all the benefits of fitness. During this stressed-out, food-centered time of year, we could all use some simple pleasures, especially when they include "side effects" like weight management and stress reduction.

1. Start an active family tradition during the holidays.

Many active traditions - walking around to see holiday lights or sledding in the park - cost nothing. Others - a shiny new toboggan or bikes for the family - are well worth the cost, since they promote family togetherness, and physical health.

2. Make an active holiday date with friends.

Here is a no-cost idea for difficult economic times. Skip the usual gift (or cookie) exchange among friends or coworkers. Instead, find fun, active ways to celebrate together, like a downtown holiday stroll or a photo "safari" in a local park.

3. Give a coupon for future physical activity and fun.

Certificates for future needs also make inexpensive (and always appreciated) gifts. Possible coupons include dog walks, snow shoveling, and yard work. Or make dates to share active fun: dance lessons, X-country skiing, or winter walks.

4. Support local businesses with fun outdoor activities.

Winter brings plenty of opportunities for outdoor fun and gift-giving. Stuff someone's stocking with day passes for an ice skating rink, Nordic ski center, or downhill ski lift. If you're an expert, include an offer for personalized instruction.

5. Warm up someone from head to toe for outdoor fun.

Consider a small gift that makes a big difference during winter activities. Hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, or socks - in bright, fun colors - are an inexpensive way to help someone look good and feel comfortable during their time outdoors.

6. Purchase a "two-fer" at a fitness center, gym, or yoga studio.

Watch for holiday specials at local fitness facilities or worksite wellness programs. You can often pick up good deals on two-for-one classes or personal training sessions. Invite a family member or friend to have fun getting fit with you.

7. Order an interactive game or fitness/dance/yoga DVD.

While interactive video games do not provide the same fitness benefits as the real sport, they do get gamers off the couch and moving. Instructional DVDs are generally less expensive and may be more beneficial, especially if they are really fun!

8. Wrap up a simple fitness gift for everyone on your list.

Fun gifts to encourage physical activity are available for every age and interest. Visit a toy department or athletic store for ideas, such as Nerf® and Koosh® games, balls of all sorts, jump ropes, yoga mats, small weights, and water bottles.

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Smart Ways to Enjoy the Gift of Vitamin D

While you're in a giving mood this holiday season, give yourself and your loved ones the hottest nutrition gift of the year: Vitamin **D**. Long known as the "sunshine vitamin," this nutrient has recently taken on an even healthier glow. The studies are stacking up and the experts are changing their recommendations. It turns out that many of us are vitamin **D**-deficient, especially in those with limited sun exposure (during winter and in northern states).

Why all the fuss about **D**? It turns out that strong bones and teeth are at the top of an impressive list of benefits from getting your daily dose of **D**. It is essential for every human cell and it also helps cells communicate with each other. Scientists now believe that **D** helps fight infection, slow muscle loss in aging, and prevent a host of serious health problems, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, gum disease, and autoimmune disorders.

How much is enough? How much is too much?

CHILDREN: For youth, the answer to "how much" is now clear. In October 2008, the American Academy of Pediatrics doubled their recommendation: from 200 IUs (International Units) to 400 IUs per day. From birth through adolescence, all children who do not consume at least a quart of vitamin D-fortified formula or milk per day should take a supplement.

ADULTS: Most vitamin D experts believe that the current guidelines for adults (200 IUs to age 50, 400 IUs from 51 to 70, and 600 IUs for 71+) are probably far too low. The current consensus is that 1000-2000 IUs per day is a healthier goal and many expect this to be the recommended amount when future guidelines are released. While the upper limit of safe intake is currently set at 2000 IUs per day for adults, many vitamin D researchers are urging that this be raised as well.

Smart sun exposure

Vitamin D is called the sunshine vitamin because skin cells can make it from the sun's ultraviolet rays. For fair-skinned people, the smart way to sun is sunscreen on the face - and direct exposure to arms, legs or torso for 10 to 15 minutes at least 2 to 3 times per week. People with darker skin, like American Indians and African Americans, need longer exposure. In winter months, the angle of the sun's rays is too low to make vitamin D, so you need to get your D from other sources.

Smart food sources

Frankly, it is hard to get the currently recommended levels of vitamin D from food sources alone. The only significant sources are fish oils and fortified foods (milk and some yogurt, cheese, juice, and cereal). In the US, fluid milk is fortified with 100 IUs per 8-ounces, so drinking your 3-A-Day will provide 300 IUs. A 3-4 ounce serving of fish (such a salmon or tuna canned in oil) can add another 350 IUs or so - and a cup of ready-to-eat cereal can provide around 40 IUs.

Smart use of vitamin D supplements

As indicated by the numbers above, a vitamin D supplement is really the only realistic way to reach the higher levels suggested for adults. This is especially true in winter - when sun exposure is ineffective anywhere above the latitude of Atlanta, Georgia. Fortunately, vitamin D supplements (as 1000 IU capsules) are readily available, relatively inexpensive, and well absorbed. Vitamin D can be taken with or without food - alone or with a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement.

For Immediate Release

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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

December 1, 2008

Made Healthy in Montana: Tasty Food Gifts from Big Sky Country

Montana-grown foods make perfect holiday gifts - giving joy on multiple levels to individuals, families, and communities. When you give healthful local foods, you feel good about sharing wholesome and nourishing products. Gift recipients reap the health benefits of grown-in-Montana items and enjoy the direct connection to our special landscape. Montana's ranchers and farmers benefit directly from sales of their products and the increased value of agricultural land. Towns and cities across Big Sky country benefit as purchasing power stays closer to home and is reinvested in other local businesses.

"Agriculture has always been an integral part of Montana's economy and culture," says Lonie Stimac, Marketing Officer for Made in Montana at the Department of Commerce. "Food and beverage producers are one of the largest categories in our online **Made in Montana** directory (www.madeinmontanausa.com/ProDir.asp). **Grown in Montana** products now range from the more traditional beef, lamb, barley, and lentils to organic Shiitake mushrooms and Siberian garlic."

The movement to support local use of Montana's agricultural treasures has itself experienced rapid growth recently. The statewide **Grow Montana** coalition (www.growmontana.ncat.org/) focuses on locally-owned food production, processing, and distribution. **AERO** (Alternative Energy Resources Organization) in Helena promotes sustainably grown food through its Abundant Montana directory (www.aeromt.org/abundant/). **Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center** in Ronan 'incubates' new food businesses and offers a selection of holiday baskets at www.mmfec.com/catalog/.

According to Stimac, there are lots of easy ways to find delicious made in Montana products for everyone on your holiday list. Here are three strategies guaranteed to support local agriculture and to please the palates of your friends and family:

- **Buy directly from home grown producers:** Watch local newspapers for special promotions by local farmers and ranchers. Visit holiday festivals and craft shows in your community where local foods are likely to be featured for sale.
- **Look for locally grown in Montana stores:** Check the shelves of your local store for products with the **Made in Montana** label. Community groceries and several chains are working hard to carry as many local food items as possible.
- **Shop online for grown healthy in Montana:** "Dozens of Montana products are available with a click of a mouse," notes Stimac. "Many can be accessed through the online **Made in Montana** directory." Here are four sites where you can find the flavorful whole grains recommended by nutrition experts - all from the golden fields of Big Sky country:

Amazing Grains (www.amazinggrains.com/) - Home of Montina™ flour, this Pablo-based business specializes in gluten-free whole grains and flours for those with gluten intolerance and wheat allergies.

Cream of the West (www.creamofthewest.com/) - Located in Harlowton and owned by eight family farms and ranches, this company sells gourmet whole grain cereals, cowboy gift crates, and other gift merchandise.

Western Trails Food (www.westerntrailsfood.com/) - From the banks of Yellowstone in Glendive, this small business offers Montana-grown barley products, customized baskets and boxes, and holiday gift certificates.

Wheat Montana Farms (www.wheatmontana.com/) - Montana's largest home-grown bakery, based in Three Forks, offers baked goods, grains, and gift items through its delis and online store, as well as in supermarkets.

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Healthful, Heartfelt Holiday Gifts

- Stir up dry ingredients or **whole grain pancakes or waffles**. Package in a festive bag (e.g., small burlap or holiday fabric bags with a bright bow). Using a sparkling ribbon, tie a small bottle of maple syrup and a recipe card for the mix to the bag.
- Purchase or prepare your favorite **dried soup mix**. Place it in an oversized holiday mug surrounded by tissue paper. Attach a soup spoon and a recipe card for whole grain muffins. Wow your friends with this simple, thoughtful, and affordable gift!
- Add zest to someone's **salad bowl** with bottles of olive oil and specialty vinegar (homemade or store bought) in wrapping. Add some fresh herbs or a handmade card with your favorite dressing recipe.
- Pack a basket with **antioxidant-rich foods and beverages**: Red wine, olive oil, dark chocolate bar, flaxseeds, almonds, and green tea. Or choose your own theme (healthy kids, smart dorm foods, brain foods for seniors, etc.) and let your creativity go!
- Put together a **basket of seasonal or specialty fruits and nuts**. Check out the new apple varieties, pomegranates, pears, tangerines, and your favorite nuts, such as almonds, cashews, pistachios, and walnuts.
- Make or purchase your favorite **fruit jam, jelly, or preserve**. Attach a small spreading knife and a tasty muffin recipe to the jar, wrap it in a festive dish towel, and tie with a big holiday bow.
- Choose a local restaurant with healthy items on the menu and make a **homemade gift certificate for a friend**. Promise a lunch date for a special occasion or for anytime they need a lift. Not only will you be giving them a delicious meal, you are also sharing your time - the most precious gift of all.
- Give a whole year of healthful enjoyment - a **subscription to a cooking magazine**, such as **Cooking Light** or **Eating Well**.
- Write (or type) and print 5 to 10 of your **favorite family recipes**. Then laminate, hole-punch in the upper left-hand corner, and tie together with a big red bow. Sharing easy-to-prepare, good-for-you recipes will make your gift even more special.

Need a holiday recipe idea?

Check the recipes from Eat Right Montana's 2008 packets. The mix for **Light As A Feather Pancakes** (February 2008) would be perfect to package as a festive gift. Visit the web site at:

www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm