



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION**

# Family Matters

*Improving Health Together*

## December 2018 Newsletter

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## Staying Active This Holiday Season

**Libby Christensen, Family & Consumer Science Agent, Routt County**



'Tis the season for hot cocoa, endless cookies, and long to-do lists. Just because there is snow on the ground and holiday songs playing on the radio, it does not mean that it is time to take a vacation from your healthy living routine. Get the fresh start you are looking for before the beginning of the New Year.

It can be hard to eat healthy and find time to be active. There are parties to plan and family gatherings to attend. Even during this busy time, it is important to stay mindful, fit and healthy. Take this time to challenge yourself and your family to make health a priority.

If you are traveling and unable to make it to the gym, the New Year provides a reason to mix things up and maybe even try something new. Here are a couple of ideas to help you and your family stay active and healthy this holiday season.

### **Make a plan and do your best to stick with it**

It is a good idea to have a solid plan in place and set some reachable goals before the madness begins. Write it down on paper and make a schedule. Once you have a plan in place, set up reminders. Use your phone or post it notes to remind you it is time to get moving.

### **Get outside and head into the snow**

Winter weather lends itself to great outdoor activities with wonderful calorie-burning potential. Get the whole family involved and try a new activity. Skating? Sledding? Snowshoeing? Fat bike? Cross-country skiing? Even giving your dog a walk helps keep both of you in shape. Just make sure you stay safe and dress appropriately.



### **Look for windows of opportunity**

Keep your workout clothes in the car, so you can take advantage of any opportunity. Getting a 10- to 20-minute workout is better than getting no workout at all.

### **For this workout, you just need 7 minutes, some floor space, a wall and a chair.**

Start with 30 seconds of jumping jacks, then do 10 (15 second) wall sits, 10 chair steps, 10 squats, 10 lunges, 10 push-ups, 10 crunches, 10 triceps dips, 10 planks, and 10 side planks and finish with running in place for 30 seconds.

Staying active this holiday season will help to deal with stress and can help to maintain your weight.

Remember, before engaging in any physical activity, it is important to make sure your doctor has cleared you for exercise. Make sure to warm-up prior to any physical activity to reduce the risk of injury. Colorado State University Extension offers a variety of resources on health, nutrition and staying healthy throughout the entire year. Visit <http://liveeatplay.colostate.edu/> for more information and suggestions.

*Helping families increase physical activity and enjoy healthy foods ...*

## Let's Talk

Talk to youth about the importance of staying active even at the busiest times of the year. They can channel all that holiday excitement into projects for parents. Instead of giving a gift, children can give a coupon book for chores that require physical activity such as sweeping floors, shoveling the sidewalk, etc. Children can exchange these chores for more outdoor fun activities with you. Virtually any form of exercise, from walking, aerobics, to yoga, can act as a stress reliever.



Make sure to get your children involved in planning activities this holiday break. Ask, "What activity would you like to do?" Be a role model and try something new. Laugh at yourself if you fall down when skating, skiing etc. Show children they do not have to be perfect at a sport to enjoy it. Schedule time on the family calendar to be active.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends children get 60 or more minutes of appropriate physical activity every day.

## Recipe for Health

### Pecan Pie Granola

Eating a healthy breakfast is a crucial first step to staying active and healthy during the holiday season. Try this simple granola recipe, paired with dried fruit, milk or yogurt to get your day started on the right foot.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

Makes: 8 servings (you can easily double or triple the recipe)

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups old-fashioned oats
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (or coconut oil)
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Prepare a cookie sheet with parchment paper or baking spray, set aside.
3. In a medium size bowl, mix old-fashioned oats, salt, brown sugar, and chopped pecans.
4. In a small bowl, combine vegetable or coconut oil, maple syrup, and vanilla extract.
5. Pour the wet ingredients (small bowl) over the oat mixture. Stir until fully mixed.
6. Pour the granola mixture onto the prepared cookie sheet. Spread out so that there is only a thin layer of granola.
7. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 25 minutes or until granola mixture, including pecans, is all toasted

