

Back to School

Eat Smart  to Play Hard

2025/2026 School Year Calendar

Recipes

Free Activity Resources

Parent Tips



# Eat Smart to Play Hard



## Hey Parents!



3rd, 4th, & 5th grade students were chosen to participate in Eat Smart to Play Hard, a 4-week game that focuses on eating smart and being active.

Please help your child each week in completing their Fun Book by cooking and being active together. Remind your child to bring their fun book to school every week!



## How to Play

1. Sign the pledge to play.
2. Help your child make a recipe and do an activity once per week.
3. Sign the fun book once a week for four weeks.
4. Remind your child to bring their fun book to school every week.



## Student Prizes

Each week your child needs signatures.  
1 recipe and 1 activity

More Parent Signatures = More Prizes

Sign the pledge to play with  
your child = Backpack



4 signatures = Beach ball

8 signatures = Medal



Come to Fun Day =  
Water Bottle with infuser



## Why?

Parent/Guardian involvement has shown to establish lifelong habits in developing:

- Improved learning
- Healthy eating habits
- Increased physical activity



Thank you for  
supporting  
your child!

# 2025-2026 School Year Calendar Important Dates

September 1 Labor Day  
 October 13 Indigenous Peoples' Day  
 November 2 Daylight Saving-Time  
 November 11 Veteran's Day  
 November 27 Thanksgiving Day  
 December 25 Christmas Day  
 January 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
 February 16 President's Day  
 March 8 Daylight Saving-Time  
 May 25 Memorial Day

## Free Resources

Summer Reading Programs  
<https://www.literacy.nm.gov/>

Summer Programs  
<https://newmexico-kids.com/summer-programs-directory>

Museum and Historic Sites Family Pass  
<https://www.newmexicoculture.org/libraries/familypass>

NM Youth Engagement  
<https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/languageandculture/youth-engagement-resources/>

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# Eggplant Pizza

Makes 8 slices, cooking time 20 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 eggplant
- 1 cup of tomato pasta sauce
- 3/4 cups of low-fat shredded mozzarella
- 1 cup diced veggies of choice (mushrooms, red bell peppers, tomatoes, etc.)

## Directions

1. Prepare the eggplant: Rinse eggplant under running warm water for 20 seconds.
2. Set the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or lightly grease a pan with olive oil.
3. Slice eggplant into ½-inch thick rounds and arrange on the prepared baking sheet. Top each eggplant slice with 1 tablespoon of tomato sauce, then sprinkle with 1 tablespoon mozzarella cheese, and veggie toppings.
4. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes until the cheese melts.
5. Serve immediately or store leftovers in the fridge.



**Eat Smart**  **to Play Hard**



## Culinary Tips

Choose eggplant with a bright purple color. For the best quality, look for eggplants that are firm, heavy in size, and free of scars. Smaller eggplants often taste less bitter than larger ones.

**Bonus Recipe:** Try making your own tomato sauce! Sauté 3 tablespoons of olive oil with a large can of crushed tomatoes, 2 finely diced cloves of garlic, 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1 teaspoon of (optional) crushed red pepper flakes.

# August 2025

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## Stay active



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Check the box each day you do 30 min. of movement

## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Mushroom



Mushrooms, like cremini, portobello, and shiitake, are rich in vitamin D; gently rinse before cooking.

## NOTES

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# Apple Energy Bites

Makes 16 balls, prep time 10 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 apple, finely diced or shredded
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 10 dates, finely chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

## Directions

1. Prepare the dates: Soak the chopped dates in hot water for about 5 minutes to soften them. Drain well.
2. In a large bowl, combine the diced or shredded apple, oats, softened dates, and cinnamon.
3. Form balls: Using your hands, mix the ingredients until they stick together. Then, roll the mixture into 1-inch balls.
4. Place the balls on a tray and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to firm up.
5. Enjoy immediately or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Eat Smart  to Play Hard



## Culinary Tips

Apples can be used in a variety of ways! Eat them fresh as a snack with nut butter, bake them in the oven for baked apple chips, add them to baked goods like pies and muffins, or mash them into applesauce!

# September 2025

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28	29	30	<p><b>They take their lead from you. Eat fruits and veggies and your kids will too.</b></p>			

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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Dates



Natural sweeteners, high in fiber and potassium, offering a nutritious alternative to refined sugars.

## NOTES

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# Pumpkin Chili

Serves 8, cook time 30 min.

## Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 onion chopped
- 1 bell pepper chopped
- 2 jalapeño peppers seeded and finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1-pound lean ground turkey
- 1 can diced tomatoes with juice, low sodium
- 1 can pumpkin purée
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 can pinto, kidney or black beans

## Directions

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium high heat. Add onion, bell pepper, jalapenos and garlic and cook, stirring frequently until tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add turkey and cook until browned. Add tomatoes, pumpkin, water, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat to medium low then add beans. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes.
4. Ladle chili into bowls and serve.



## Culinary Tips

Incorporate pumpkin into baked goods like muffins or bread, roast it as a flavorful side dish seasoned with spices, and toast the seeds with a light sprinkle of salt for a crunchy snack.



# October 2025

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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

Kidney bean



Rich in plant-based protein and fiber, supporting heart health and blood sugar control.

## NOTES

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# Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese

Eat Smart  to Play Hard



Serves 8, prep time 75 min. ,cook time 15 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter (for greasing the dish)
- 1 pound whole grain macaroni
- 1 medium butternut squash
- 1/2 cup water (for microwaving squash)
- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 2 cups shredded low-fat cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste



## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F and butter a 9-inch square baking dish. Set aside.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook macaroni 2 minutes less than the package says. Drain and set aside. Reserve the pot.
3. Cut squash in half, remove seeds, and chop into large chunks. Place in a microwave-safe bowl with ½ cup water. Cover and microwave on high for about 10 minutes, until tender. Let cool.
4. While the squash cools, grate the cheddar cheese.
5. Return the cooled squash to the pot used for pasta. Mash with a fork, then stir in the cottage cheese and milk until smooth.
6. Add the pasta, cheddar cheese, salt, and pepper to the pot. Mix until fully combined.
7. Spread mixture into the prepared baking dish. Bake for about 45 minutes, until bubbling and golden around the edges.

## Culinary Tips



To prepare winter squash, use a sharp, heavy-duty knife. Place the squash on a stable cutting board to prevent slipping. Cut in half and scoop out the seeds. Winter squash can be baked or boiled. Baking brings out a rich caramelized flavor great for side dishes or stuffing, while boiling creates a soft texture perfect for purees, soups, and mashes. To bake, place cut side down on a baking sheet. Bake at 375°F for 40 to 50 minutes. To boil, remove the skin with a veggie peeler and chop the squash into small pieces. Boil for 20-25 minutes until tender.





# November 2025

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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

Butternut squash



The sweetest winter squash, offering 214% of daily vitamin A per cup.

## NOTES

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# Avocado Breakfast Toast

Eat Smart  Play Hard

Serves 4, cook time 10 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 ripe avocado
- 2 bagels, sourdough bread, or whole grain toast
- 4 tomatoes
- 4 eggs cooked to your preference
- Salt & pepper
- Optional: Try adding different veggies like chopped bell pepper, spinach, or microgreens

## Directions

1. Slice the avocado and spread it on a toasted bagel or bread. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Top each with a slice of tomato and a cooked egg.
3. Serve Immediately – enjoy!



## Culinary Tips

Avocados can be used to add flavor, texture, and as a substitute in many recipes! Try adding it to dressings and smoothies for creaminess or using a mashed avocado in place of mayonnaise on a sandwich.

## Bonus Recipe:

Make guacamole by mashing one large avocado with the juice of lime, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon of garlic powder and onion powder.





# December 2025

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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Tomato



Tomatoes are botanically fruits, rich in vitamins A and C, enjoyed raw, grilled, or roasted.

## NOTES

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# Fruit Sandwich

Serves 4, cook time 10 min.

## Ingredients

- 2 whole grain pita pockets, tortilla, or whole grain bread slices
- 1/4 cup of natural peanut butter or almond butter
- Thinly slice 2 fruits of your choice: banana, apple, berries, peach, or pear

## Directions

1. Spread a thin layer of nut butter on your choice of bread.
2. Top choice of bread with the combination of your two fruits.



## Culinary Tips

Go savory! Make a sandwich with hummus and chopped cucumber, carrots, and bell peppers.



Go warm! Make a sandwich with sliced turkey, apple slices, and cheese on whole grain bread. Grill until cheese melts.





# January 2026

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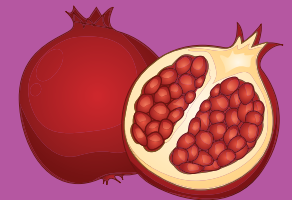
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Check the box each day you do 30 min. of movement

## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Pomegranate



Rich in fiber and antioxidants; select heavy, deep red ones for optimal freshness.

## NOTES

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# Roasted Chickpeas

Serves 8, cook time 40 min.

## Ingredients

- 2 (15 ounce) cans of chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Optional Spices: 1/2 teaspoon pepper, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, 1 teaspoon onion powder, 1 teaspoon dried parsley, 2 teaspoons dried dill weed, 1/2 teaspoon chili powder

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Drain and rinse chickpeas in a strainer. Shake to remove excess water and pat dry with paper towels.
3. Spread chickpeas in a single layer on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and optional spices. Toss to coat evenly.
4. Place baking sheet on the lowest rack of the oven. Roast for 30–40 minutes, shaking the pan every 10–15 minutes to ensure even cooking.
5. Check for Crispiness: Chickpeas are done when they are crispy and golden brown. Let cool before serving.



**Eat Smart**  **Play Hard**

## Culinary Tips

- Add roasted chickpeas as a crunchy topping to your salad, sandwich, grain bowl, or soup.
- Garbanzo beans, also known as chickpeas, are among the oldest cultivated crops, with evidence of their domestication dating back over 10,000 years.





# February 2026

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**Want your kids to reach  
for a healthy snack?**



**Make sure fruits and  
veggies are in reach.**

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physical activity  
each day



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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Cauliflower



Cauliflower, meaning  
'cabbage flower', comes  
in white, yellow, green,  
and purple varieties and  
is rich in vitamin C.

## NOTES

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**Eat Smart**  **to Play Hard**

# Hearty Egg Burritos

Serves 4, prep and cook time 45 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 small onion
- 1 medium bell pepper
- 4 (8-inch) whole wheat flour tortillas
- 1/4 cup low-fat cheese (cheddar, pepperjack, etc.)
- 1 can beans (pinto, black, etc.)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt & pepper to taste

## Optional Ingredients

- 1/4 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro

## Directions

1. Peel and dice the onion. Wash, dry, and dice the bell pepper. Drain and rinse the beans.
2. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a pan. Add onion and bell pepper; cook for 2–3 minutes. Add beans, cumin, salt, and pepper. Cook until warm and soft. Set aside.
3. Beat eggs with a pinch of salt and pepper. In the same pan, add 1 tbsp olive oil, pour eggs and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until just set.
4. Fill tortillas with eggs, bean-veggie mix, and cheese. Add optional cilantro or yogurt. Fold and serve.

## Culinary Tips



- Feel free to customize your burrito by swapping in any veggies or spices you like! Instead of bell peppers, try spinach, tomatoes, zucchini, mushrooms, or corn—fresh or frozen works great. For spices, mix it up with Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes, garlic powder, chili powder, or smoked paprika.
- Meal prep for the week. Let burritos cool completely, then wrap tightly in foil or parchment and freeze. To reheat, microwave for 1–2 minutes or warm in a skillet until heated through.



# March 2026

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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Bell pepper



A red pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper and when dried and ground up, it's the spice paprika.

## NOTES

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# Apple Chicken Salad

Serves 4, cook time 45 min.

## Ingredients

- 2 apples
- 2 celery stalks
- 2 chicken breasts (skinless, cooked, about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 16 lettuce leaves (Bibb, Romaine, green or red leaf)

## Directions

1. Cut apples into quarters, remove the core, and chop. Dice celery and cooked chicken into small, bite-sized pieces.
2. In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients except the lettuce. Stir until evenly mixed.
3. Arrange lettuce on plates and spoon the apple and chicken salad on top.



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## Culinary Tips



- **Add a Crunch:** Toss in some chopped nuts like walnuts, pecans, or almonds for extra texture and flavor. Toasting them first brings out a rich, nutty taste!
- **Wrap It Up:** Use the salad as a filling for whole wheat wraps or whole grain bread for a portable, delicious lunch.





# April 2026

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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

Celery



Nibbling on celery helps clean your teeth and mouth after a meal!

## NOTES

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# Banana Oatmeal Cookie

Makes 14 cookies, prep time 10 min., cook time 15 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter or olive oil
- 2 very ripe bananas
- 1 cup oats (quick-cooking or old fashioned rolled)
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, blueberries, etc.)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Optional: add chopped nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc.) and/or chocolate chips

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a baking sheet with butter or olive oil.
2. In a medium bowl, mash bananas with a fork until smooth.
3. Add oats, cinnamon, vanilla, and dried fruit. Stir well.
4. Form cookies: Scoop spoon-sized dough balls onto the baking sheet. Flatten each with the back of a spoon or bottom of a glass.
5. Bake 10 to 15 minutes. Cool before serving.

## Culinary Tips

Get playful and try new cookie flavors by swapping out the mashed bananas for other fruits or veggies! Some examples that work great include mashed sweet potato, pumpkin purée, or unsweetened applesauce.





# May 2026

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<input type="checkbox"/>						
31						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Stay active



Playing with your kids is a great way to get your 30 minutes of physical activity each day



Check the circle each day you drink at least 10 cups of water



Check the box each day you do 30 min. of movement

## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Grapes



Look for grapes that are plump and firmly attached to green stems for freshness.

## NOTES

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# Turkey Bean Burger

Makes 6 servings, cook time 25 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 head romaine lettuce
- 1/2 bag corn, frozen
- 1 can black beans
- 1 egg
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1/2 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/4 cup whole wheat breadcrumbs
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 whole wheat buns
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

## Directions

1. Wash, dry, and slice the lettuce. Thaw and drain the corn. Drain and rinse the beans. Crack the egg into a small bowl. Measure out all remaining ingredients.
2. In a large bowl, combine turkey, corn, beans, chili powder, breadcrumbs, egg, salt, and pepper. Mix until well combined.
3. Shape the mixture into six patties and set aside.
4. Heat a skillet over medium heat and add olive oil. Cook patties for 8–12 minutes on each side, or until fully cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.
5. Place patties on buns with lettuce. Serve and enjoy!



**Eat Smart**  **Play Hard**

## Culinary Tips

Mix a spoonful of grated onion or zucchini into the turkey bean burger mix—this adds moisture and keeps the patties juicy, since lean turkey and beans can dry out easily.



# June 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	29	30	<p><b>Eat smart to play hard.</b>  <b>Eat fruits and veggies at meals</b>  <b>and snacks.</b></p>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

## Stay active



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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Corn



A basic food for ancient cultures, comes in many colors and contains nerve-healthy Vitamin B1.

## NOTES

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# Burrito Bowl

Makes 4 servings, prep and cook time 40 min.

## Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1/4 red onion
- 1 red bell pepper
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 cups spinach or other greens
- 1 can (15-oz) low-sodium black beans
- 1/2 cup salsa, divided
- 1/4 sliced jalapeño
- 2 cups cooked chicken breast (optional)
- 1 teaspoon taco seasoning
- 1 lime
- salt & pepper to taste

## Directions



1. Prepare taco seasoning and chicken (if using). Wash and dry produce. Chop spinach, dice onion and bell pepper, mince garlic and jalapeño. Drain and rinse black beans.
2. In a pot, combine brown rice and water. Bring to a boil, add salt, then cover and simmer for 35 minutes. Turn off stove and keep covered, let sit for 15 minutes, then fluff with a fork and set aside.
3. While rice cooks, heat 1/2 tablespoon olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add onion, bell pepper, and garlic. Cook until lightly caramelized, then stir in spinach to wilt. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Wipe out the pan and heat 1/4 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat. Add black beans, jalapeño, 1/4 cup salsa, and diced chicken (if using). Cook until warmed through, adding water as needed. Season with salt, pepper, and taco seasoning.
5. Add about 1/2 cup rice to each bowl. Top with sautéed veggies, then the bean/chicken mix. Finish with extra salsa and a squeeze of lime. Serve and enjoy!



## Culinary Tips

Mix up your bowl by swapping ingredients—try quinoa or cauliflower rice instead of brown rice, add roasted sweet potatoes or corn for extra sweetness, or switch black beans for pinto beans or chickpeas!





# July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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26	27	28	29	30	31	
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## Stay active

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## FOOD HIGHLIGHT

### Lime



Lime's acidity enhances the flavor of many dishes, making it a popular cooking ingredient.

## NOTES

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# Eat Smart to Play Hard



SNAP-Ed  
  
New Mexico

 **SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE**  
PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER

**Eat Smart**  
  
**Play Hard**

University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center–Social Marketing.

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP.