



Welcome to the **Ask an Expert** program, a free service and benefit of the Montana University System (MUS) Benefits Plan and Wellness Program.

This **Ask an Expert Guide** is designed to provide you with a program overview and expectations, contact information, instructions on how to schedule and prepare for calls, and tips on getting started immediately.

The **Ask an Expert** program has been offered since plan year 2005/06 and many participants report improvements in eating and exercising behaviors and better health, such as feeling better and stronger, weight loss, and lowered cholesterol or blood pressure. The program's continuation and quality improvement efforts depend on every participant's feedback, therefore completion of the program evaluation is mandatory even if you don't think you made progress or met all your goals. A statistical report is generated at the end of each plan year and presented to the Inter-Units Benefits Committee. All names and personal information remain confidential; only statistical data is reported. For those who enrolled in **WellAwards**, you are eligible for credit only if you meet the full program requirements as described in the book.

Whether you come to the program to do a complete lifestyle overhaul or just to get tips on how to train for a 10K run, **Ask an Expert** provides an opportunity for you to get your diet and exercise questions addressed in a convenient and confidential manner. Thank you for participating and for taking the next step towards *your* ultimate health and well-being.

GETTING STARTED TODAY:

The clearer you are about your expectations, the better results you will achieve. Get a journal or piece of paper and actually write out your answers to each of the below questions. Self-reflection is an opportunity to get *really* honest with yourself and it provides a way to re-examine your beliefs or goals as you change over time. Below are some questions for you to consider today, before you begin the program:

1. What are my program goals? What results do I *really* want? What's realistic for me?
2. Why now? Why am I willing to commit to making changes at this time in my life?
3. What obstacles might stand in the way of my success?
4. What resources do I need or currently have that would contribute to my success?
5. How will I measure my success?
6. How will I reward my success?

Below are some nutrition and exercise recommendations to help you get started as well, before your first call(s) with the expert(s) ↗

- **Start today to eat more healthily** by reading food labels, eating fruits and vegetables at every meal and snack; cutting back on soda and sweets; keeping a simple food journal; or measuring portions. You know what to do – make a choice today about how you'd like to start to improve your eating habits.
- **Start to consciously be more active.** Again, you already know what you need to do – just do it – take the next small step. If you are currently a non-exerciser, the easiest, and arguably the best, thing you can do is to just start walking. You don't need to join a club or buy special outfits, although good walking shoes are recommended, you just need to figure out how you can gradually add 5 minute increments to your daily activities.

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE:

Program Timetable	Scheduling Appointments with Experts (Dietitian / Exercise Specialist)	What to Expect During Calls
1 st Month	1st Call(s) Schedule expert(s) call(s) with Program Assistant, who will assign one dietitian and one exercise specialist for you to work with for the duration of your program.	You and your expert(s) will review your application, health history, and exercise and/or diet-related habits, preferences, questions, and goals. Your expert(s) will create a personalized diet/exercise plan based on your interests and needs.
2 nd Month	2nd Call(s) <i>optional, but recommended</i> Schedule with Expert(s) during 1 st call	You and your expert(s) will review your exercise and/or diet plan(s), discuss your progress, challenges, and questions, and set new goals.
3 rd Month	3rd Call(s) <i>optional</i> Schedule with Expert(s) during 2 nd call	Same as 2 nd Call
Program Completion	Evaluation <i>mandatory</i> Sent to you by Program Assistant	You must advise the expert(s) when you are complete with the program. Re-enrollment is allowed once every plan year.

APPOINTMENTS/CALLS:

- Appointments (telephone calls) with expert(s) are **30 to 40 minutes**.
- Make sure you **write all appointment dates/times** on your personal calendar.
- **Keep your appointment!** The expert will call you at your designated time. If he/she is a few minutes late, he/she is probably finishing a call with another person and will get to you soon. If, for some reason, the expert is severely delayed, contact the Program Assistant so she can find a resolution.
- **Cancelling your appointment:** You must notify the expert(s) at least one business day in advance if you need to cancel. If you fail to notify the expert(s) and miss 2 appointments, you may no longer participate in the program. Please note that cancelled or missed calls may delay appointments for several weeks.
- **Between-appointment contact with expert(s)** is allowed if you have exercise or diet-related questions prior to your next appointment. Please contact the Program Assistant for any other questions.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CALLS:

- Find a **quiet place** with no distractions.
- Have a **paper** and **pen** ready for note-taking.
- Have all your **program materials** handy (copy of application and diet/exercise plans)
- Have your **calendar** handy to schedule subsequent appointments.
- Be ready with **questions** and to **make a commitment**, goal, or plan for next step(s).

MEET THE EXPERTS:

The Program Assistant will assign one dietitian and one exercise specialist for you to work with throughout the program.

Marya Bruning, RD, Registered Dietitian, has been a registered dietitian since 2001, when she graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in Food and Nutrition. She has worked in a variety of nutrition-related positions in Missoula and Seattle, including clinical (hospital) dietitian, nutrition counselor, food service manager, university instructor, and community dietitian. In 2005 she earned a Certificate of Training in Adult Weight Management from the American Dietetic Association. Marya (pronounced "Mariah") loves farmers' markets, oversees travel, mountain lakes, and Glacier Park.

Shawn Dunnagan, RD, CDE, Registered Dietitian, Certified Diabetes Educator, graduated from the University of New Hampshire as a registered dietitian in 1990. She was a clinical dietitian at Bozeman Deaconess Hospital (BDH) for 8 years. In 2002, she earned her Diabetes Educator credential and worked for 4 years coordinating the BDH Diabetes Program. In 2005, she completed her Personal Trainer and Weight Management certification from the American Council on Exercise, and continues to be active in physical fitness training and education. She is currently an adjunct professor at MSU and actively works in the local foods movement. She has a mission to promote preventive health and nutrition awareness through the Gallatin Valley Farm to School Program. Shawn and her husband Tim have strong ties to Montana and got married in the Bridger Mountains near Bozeman in 1987. They are very grateful to be able to live the good life in Montana, along with their son Bridger and daughter, Brooke.

Heidi Kaminski, MS, Exercise Specialist, has a master's degree in nutrition and a master's in exercise physiology. She has been a certified personal trainer for about ten years and a certified Pilates instructor for four years. She is an avid cyclist, runner, skier, volleyball player, and enjoys anything to do with the outdoors. Heidi is married and lives in Darby, MT.

Brian Sharkey, MS, Exercise Specialist, has a master's degree in exercise physiology from MSU Bozeman and a master's in counseling from UM Missoula. Having worked with varied populations, Brian particularly enjoys working with middle-aged people who never thought fitness was possible. Brian also enjoys mountain biking, trail running with his dogs, taking hikes with his family, and reading. He is married and has two young daughters.

PROGRAM CONTACTS:

- **Lisa Hofman - Program Assistant:**
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1-866-644-2025 (toll free) or 243-2025 (Missoula)
- **Marya Bruning:** maryabruning@gmail.com Cell Phone: 406-396-0826
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"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." Wayne Dyer