Portion Sizes Are Out Of Control!

It seems everywhere we look we’re surrounded by giant plates of food. Whether it’s in the work cafeteria, at the “all-you-can-eat” buffet, or at our own dinner tables, we’re losing the battle of sensible portion size, and it’s showing in our ever-expanding waist size.

Recent studies have shown that 35 percent of the American population is overweight, and another 27 percent is obese. That means that six out of every 10 people you see on a daily basis could go to a doctor’s office in the next year. It’s no surprise that the number of overweight people continues to increase.

The problem with portion sizes

Portion sizes are out of control, and it shows in our waistlines. How do your meals measure up? Here is your guide to eating right and living well.

The Battle Of Sensible Portion Size

For More Information

American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org

American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org

US Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

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Recent studies have shown that 35 percent of the American population is overweight, and another 27 percent is obese. That means that six out of every 10 people you see on a daily basis could stand to lose some weight, and increasing food portion sizes are partly to blame.

Even though the battle to control portion size will be challenging, there’s no need to fear—the tips and strategies in this brochure will help you control both your portion sizes and your weight in the years to come.
The vast majority of Americans have no idea how many calories they consume in a given day. By simply being aware of the calories your body requires, compared to the calories you consume, you’ll be taking some big steps towards a thinner, healthier you. The chart below outlines recommended calorie intake.

- Children ages 2 to 6 years, many inactive women, and some older adults may need about 1,600 calories per day.
- Most children over 6, teen girls, active women, and many inactive men may need about 2,200 calories per day.
- Teen boys and active men may need about 2,800 calories per day.

Unfortunately, due to increasing portion sizes, most Americans far exceed their recommended calorie per day. One of the first steps in controlling portion size is understanding the common definitions. Check out the panel to the right to learn more about portion and serving sizes.

Omit portions of high calorie foods and snacks. Plain and simple, in the battle to cut portion size, fruits and vegetables will help you feel full and save on calories at the same time. Staying at Home: Tips For Eating Smaller Portions

OK, so those are some tips for eating out, what about reducing portion sizes when eating at home? Check out the following tips.

- Don’t “bag it.” If you’re snacking at home, put a few pretzels or chips in a small bowl instead of eating by the handful right out of the bag.
- Go single. Instead of buying snack foods in bulk (or even by the box) buy single servings—this way you won’t eat the whole box/bag in a moment of weakness.
- Take half off. When using butter, sour cream, mayonnaise and cheese, use only half the amount you usually do. It may take some getting used to, but it’s easier than going without. Also, check out some of the low-fat varieties of these spreads, they can be very good. Remember: Just because it’s low fat or low calorie, doesn’t mean you can eat as much as you want. Calories add up, even when you’re eating low-calories or low-fat food.

Still Hungry? Cutting portion sizes takes some getting used to. If, after attempting to cut your portion size, you’re still feeling hungry, try filling up on fruits and vegetables. The American Cancer Society recommends five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day to help prevent cancer, and chances are you’re not getting enough. By filling up on fruits and vegetables, you’ll not only cut your cancer risk but you’ll also be getting enough. By filling up on fruits and vegetables, you’ll not only cut your cancer risk but you’ll also be getting enough.

Portion Size? Serving Size? Oh My!

Portion Size—A portion size is the amount of food you choose to eat. There is no standard portion size, and no single right or wrong size. They can be larger or smaller than recommended serving sizes depending on how much you consume.

Serving Size—A serving size is a standard amount used to help give advice about how much to eat. The serving size is used as a measurement standard for providing nutritional information such as calories, cholesterol, sodium, or fat. Serving sizes are designed to help you compare the nutritional values of similar foods.

Now that we know a bit more about portion size and serving size, we need to learn how to put this new knowledge into action. To get a feel for how much you should consume, you’ll need to compare the Nutrition Facts Label on your food item to the serving size suggested by the Food Guide Pyramid. Here’s the key: The Nutrition Facts Label and the Food Guide Pyramid won’t always match up (e.g., the nutrition facts label may list an entire English muffin as one serving, whereas the food guide pyramid would list it as two servings.).

You’ll need to get comfortable comparing one against the other to get the proper portion size.

Don’t feel up to it? The section of this brochure, Portion Your Platter: Serving Sizes Made Simple, will take some of the work out of understanding portion sizes.

Eating Out: Tips For Eating Smaller Portions

Try the following tips the next time you visit your favorite restaurant—they’ll help you control your portion sizes.

- Order a regular hamburger. Try ordering a regular (single patty) hamburger the next time you visit a fast food restaurant. By substituting a smaller burger for a larger one, you’ll save about 150 calories.
- Order the small fries. By eating only a small order of fries instead of the “super-sized” fries, you’ll save about 300 calories.
- Don’t drown yourself in soda. A small soda has 150 fewer calories than a large one.
- Share and share alike. This is simple math. If you share an entrée with a friend the next time you visit a restaurant, you’ll only eat half as much.
- Order an appetizer. But only an appetizer! Getting an appetizer instead of a main course can help control the amount you eat because appetizers are often much smaller than entrées.

Get it to-go. Ask for half your meal to be packaged in a “to-go” box, and eat it for lunch the next day.

Tips For Eating Smaller Portions

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