



Portion Control and Calorie Intake

Have you ever stopped to consider how the servings of food you prepare or are served compare to the recommended amount you should eat? Are you eating more than you realize? Average food portions have grown tremendously over the years along with America's waistlines. Food is often served or packaged in quantities for two or even three people, but it is hard for us to recognize because it has become the "norm". For example, an average soda pop about 20 years ago was 6 to 7 ounces. Today it is 20 ounces. A normal sized chocolate chip cookie was 1.5 inches and 55 calories. Today it is 3.5 inches and 275 calories. Fast food chain servings are 2 to 5 times larger than when they were first introduced - a hamburger now has almost 300 more calories. From a consumer's viewpoint, larger sizes might seem like a better deal because you get a lot more food for not much more money, but is it really worth it? The larger the serving, the more we tend to eat.

Portion Distortion

What you're served



1/2 lb. cheeseburger, French fries, 3/4 cup ketchup, tomato slice and lettuce.
1,345 calories
83 grams fat

What's one serving



1/4 lb. cheeseburger, half the French fries, 2 tablespoons ketchup, tomato slice and lettuce.
685 calories
33 grams fat

Following the recommended sized portions is an important way to reach and maintain a healthy weight. You don't necessarily need to weigh, measure or count calories to eat the correct amount. Comparing food to the size and shape of common household objects make it super simple. For example, 3 ounces of meat = the size of a deck of cards; rice or pasta or vegetables - half a cup = half a baseball; a waffle or pancake = a CD; a bagel = size of a 6 oz. tuna can; a potato = size of a computer mouse. Using a smaller plate and glass helps trick our eyes and brain too. The same amount of food spread out on a large plate can leave us thinking we aren't getting enough when we really are. Using MyPlate as a guide and reading the Nutrition Facts food labels are useful tools too. See the attachment as a helpful guide.

Controlling portions at home may not be nearly as challenging as when dining out or on the road. Platter sized plates, tempting choices, rushed schedules, etc. all make sticking to our plans a bit tricky. Well over half of us eat away from home on any given day, so our choices make a huge impact. A key to being successful with your health goals is being prepared.

- Check the menu and narrow down your choices ahead of time if possible.
- Don't skip meals to "save up" for your meal out. You will most likely end up overeating.
- Eat a healthy snack before you go so you won't feel as hungry.
- Once you are ready to order determine how hungry you are. Will an appetizer, half portion or option from the Child or Senior menu be enough?
- Order first so you aren't tempted to change your mind if your dining companion(s) choose something you've decided isn't one of your healthy items.
- Share an entrée or ask for a "to go" box when you order. Divide your meal in half when it's served and take leftovers home for another meal.
- Substitute sides
- Start with a salad or cup of soup to help curb your appetite
- Choose main dishes with vegetables



- Order steamed, grilled or broiled dishes instead of sautéed, fried or ones in gravy or sauces
- Ask for salad dressings and sauces on the side so you can control the amount
- Pack fresh fruit, cut-up veggies, string cheese, whole grain cereals or nuts and a refillable water bottle to keep you from stopping for sweet or fatty snack foods and high calorie beverages.

Do you slowly savor your meals and enjoy the pleasures of eating? Or, do you scarf down your food as quickly as possible while driving down the road and talking on your phone? If you answered yes to the later question, you may be a mindless eater. Mindless eating is all too common in today's fast-paced, fast-track world. Being fully aware of what and how much you are eating might sound a bit simple or silly, but it really plays a big role in things such as helping to control portion sizes, influencing what causes us to eat outside of hunger, and increasing our enjoyment of food. It also ties in well with portion control and meal planning whether at home or on the go. Making a few small, simple changes can help you become a more mindful, and ultimately, healthier eater.

Mindful eating involves paying attention to hunger cues, tastes, textures, colors, and generally being in tune with food. Being fully present and actively focused while eating promotes a positive relationship with food and may help you leave behind unhealthy and unsatisfying habits.

- ✓ First, consider how and when you eat. Is it only when you are hungry, or do you reach for a snack while watching TV? Do you eat when you're stressed or bored, or to reward yourself?
- ✓ Actively evaluate hunger before eating - are you really starving or just thirsty? Maybe food isn't what you want at all. Listen carefully to what your body is telling you!
- ✓ How much sleep you are getting? Lack of sleep has been shown to have a direct link to hunger and overeating.
- ✓ Put the amount you plan to eat on your plate BEFORE starting, instead of eating from the container or sack.
- ✓ Notice the color, aroma, taste and texture of your food.
- ✓ Eat slowly and only while sitting down to help you enjoy your meals more and realize when your stomach is full. It is OK to stop eating if you are no longer hungry and there is still food on your plate.
- ✓ Avoid distractions (TV, cell phone, driving, working, etc.)! Put your fork down between bites and chew your food completely - feelings of hunger may disappear sooner and make overeating less likely.

Understanding Your Calories Needs

It may seem obvious that when exercising or engaging in physical activity our bodies are burning calories, but did you know while resting you're also burning calories? This is called the basal metabolic rate. Basal metabolic rate (BMR) is the amount of energy used to simply stay alive in the absence of any physical activity.

You can easily calculate this with the Harris-Benedict Formula or visit this [link](#). It is also important to determine your activity level. If you live a more sedentary lifestyle your body does not require as many calories; however, if you live a more active lifestyle your body requires more calories.

An InBody scan can help further determine your body composition to detail your caloric needs, body water, proteins, minerals, and body fat. This information is very useful when calculating your nutritional needs.



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Additional Resources:

MyPlate - USDA - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

University of Nebraska Extension - <https://food.unl.edu/cook-it-quick-documents/prevent-portion-distortion.pdf>

National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute -

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/distortion.htm>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln – *Quiz: Do You Really Know How Much You Eat?*

<http://food.unl.edu/quiz-do-you-really-know-how-much-you-eat>

Live Eat Play Colorado – Mindful Eating - http://www.liveeatplay.colostate.edu/eat/healthy-diet/weight-mgmt/index.php#.VpWPaFK8R_N


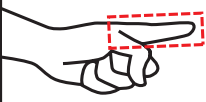



















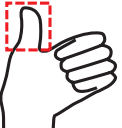
National Institutes of Health – *Mindfulness Matters: Can Living in the Moment Improve Your Health?*

<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/issue/Jan2012/Feature2>


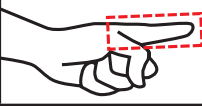

















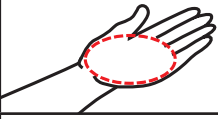

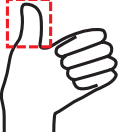
HelpGuide – *Stress Symptoms, Signs, and Causes*, <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-symptoms-causes-and-effects.htm>



Serving-Size Chart

FOOD	SYMBOL	COMPARISON	SERVING SIZE
Dairy: Milk, Yogurt, Cheese			
Cheese (string cheese)	 	Pointer finger	1½ ounces
Milk and yogurt (glass of milk)	 	One fist	1 cup
Vegetables			
Cooked carrots	 	One fist	1 cup
Salad (bowl of salad)	 	Two fists	2 cups
Fruits			
Apple	 	One fist	1 medium
Canned peaches	 	One fist	1 cup
Grains: Breads, Cereals, Pasta			
Dry cereal (bowl of cereal)	 	One fist	1 cup
Noodles, rice, oatmeal (bowl of noodles)	 	Handful	½ cup
Slice of whole-wheat bread	 	Flat hand	1 slice
Protein: Meat, Beans, Nuts			
Chicken, beef, fish, pork (chicken breast)	 	Palm	3 ounces
Peanut butter (spoon of peanut butter)	 	Thumb	1 tablespoon

Gráfica de Comparación de Porciones

ALIMENTO	SÍMBOLO	COMPARACIÓN	PORCIÓN
Lácteos: Leche, Yogur, Queso			
Queso (queso para deshebrar)			Dedo índice 1½ onzas
Leche y yogur (vaso de leche)			Un puño 1 taza
Verduras			
Zanahorias cocidas			Un puño 1 taza
Ensalada (tazón de ensalada)			Dos puños 2 tazas
Frutas			
Manzana			Un puño 1 mediana
Duraznos enlatados			Un puño 1 taza
Granos: Panes, Cereales, Pasta			
Cereal seco (tazón de cereal)			Un puño 1 taza
Fideos, arroz, avena (tazón de tallarines)			Puñado ½ taza
Rebanada de pan integral			Mano extendida 1 rebanada
Proteína: Carne, Frijoles, Nueces			
Pollo, carne, pescado, puerco (pechuga de pollo)			Palma 3 onzas
Crema de cacahuete (cucharada de crema de cacahuete)			Pulgar 1 cucharada



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Applying the Lesson

Choose one of the following activities to apply what you learned about your health and your healthy goal setting. Write a short paragraph (3 to 5 sentences) to describe what you did and learned from the activity selected. Report your Applying the Lesson results by Online form, email, fax or hard copy to your county Extension Office.

Option 1: Think about your eating habits. Do you tend to reach for food when you are bored, stressed, or just because it is meal time? All types of things besides hunger influence our food choices and eating patterns. When you want to eat but are not hungry, what can you do to take your mind off food? List several examples and ways you can implement them.

Option 2: Combine mindful eating with portion control for at least one day this week. Give yourself half the amount you would usually eat. Take 20 minutes to eat slowly and thoughtfully and enjoy what you are eating. Are you satisfied with the smaller portion? Did you include all food groups? What was most challenging or stood out to you the most?

Option 3: Implement at least two of the tips for handling portions when eating out or on the go. Which two did you choose? What difference did this make for you?