

# Portion Size

*Leader Directions*

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## Description

How does your portion size measure up to the recommended? The truth is our portion sizes have increased over the years along with our waistlines! Step one is doing a reality check on what a portion size should really look like. Learn to manage how much you eat and feel the benefits of eating less.

## Lesson Goals

Participants will learn:

- It's not just what you eat, but how much.
- Compare serving sizes of today and of those from the past.
- Learn the Nutrition Facts/food labels
- Learn the recommended serving sizes
- Beverage size matters when watching sugar and caloric intakes
- Dining out challenges – what is a restaurant's serving size
- Tips on healthier dining out

## Optional Activities

- Discussion – Does your individual dietary intake align with the recommendations? Are these recommendations realistic?
- Discussion – How do you feel when you overeat?
- Group Activity – Hand out Nutrition Facts samples (actual food labels) and see if they can find specific information from the label such as serving size, calories, fat/sugar/protein content, sodium, and cholesterol information.

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### Handouts

- Nutrition Facts – can use handout from resources/references below or bring in Nutrition Facts from items in your kitchen (i.e. cereal, soup, pasta, tuna)
- Tips for Dining out. Available at link below in resources/references

### Resources/References

1. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right.htm>
2. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/nutrition-facts.htm>
3. [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/healthdisp/pdf/tipsheets/Tips-for-Eating-Out.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/healthdisp/pdf/tipsheets/Tips-for-Eating-Out.pdf)
4. [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

### Materials

1. Handouts
2. Nutrition Facts/food labels from home
3. Items to indicate proper serving sizes: deck of cards, baseball, dice, tennis ball, glassware from home, music CD
4. Optional: 9-inch paper plate to represent MY PLATE

### A Serving or a Portion?

Healthy eating includes making healthful food choices, which means knowing what and how much you eat. Do you know the difference between serving and portion sizes? While the terms serving and portion often are used interchangeably, they actually mean different things.

A "serving" is the amount of food recommended in consumer education materials such as MyPlate. A "portion" is the amount of a food you choose to eat at any one time — which may be more or less than a serving.

Here are some everyday comparisons to help you figure out your serving sizes.

- 1 teaspoon of margarine is the size of one dice
- 3 ounces of meat is the size of a deck of cards
- 1 cup of pasta is the size of a baseball
- 1½ ounces of cheese is the size of four stacked dice
- ½ cup of fresh fruit is the size of a tennis ball
- To overcome portion distortion and to downsize your helpings, try these tips.
- Eat from a plate, not a package, so you know how much you eat.
- Use smaller dishes, such as a lunch plate for your dinner, so less looks like more.

Once you get a good sense of serving sizes, you can compare them to the portions you eat and make any necessary modifications.

## Helpful and Healthful Dining Out

Eating at a restaurant doesn't have to sabotage a healthy diet. Use smart-eating strategies: Plan ahead, consider the menu and choose foods carefully to keep you on your plan.

### Preparation

**Have a plan.** Eat a light dinner if you ate a big lunch that day. Or, if you know ahead of time that you're going to a restaurant, cut back on calories during other meals during the day. Knowing menu terms and cooking basics makes ordering easier, especially if you need to control calories. So, look for foods that are steamed, broiled, baked or grilled, and limit fried and sautéed items or foods described as "crispy," "rich" or "au gratin."

### Choosing a Restaurant

**Think ahead.** Consider meal options at different restaurants and look for places with a wide range of menu items. Check online menus, if available, for nutrition information ahead of time.

### Ordering

**Be deliberate when ordering.** Balance your meal by including healthier selections from all the different food groups such as lean meats, low- or non-fat dairy, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Look for freshly made entrée salads that give you "balance in a bowl." For example, entrée salads with baked or grilled chicken, low-fat cheese or seafood provide protein along with fiber and other nutrients. If you are counting calories, use a low-fat dressing or ask for it on the side or skip some of the extras, such as croutons.

For sandwich toppings, go with low-fat options including lettuce, tomato and onion; use condiments such as ketchup, mustard or relish and low-fat dressings.

Round out your meal by ordering healthy side dishes, such as a side salad with low-fat dressing, baked potato or fruit. Boost the nutritional value of your baked potato by topping it with vegetables, salsa or chili.

**Substitute.** Ask for a side salad with low-fat dressing to replace fries in a combination meal. Many restaurants honor requests, so don't be afraid to be assertive, ask menu questions and make special requests to meet your nutritional needs.

**Control portions.** Many restaurants serve huge portions, sometimes enough for two or three people. Order menu items that contain fewer calories and eat a smaller portion. Bring leftovers home for another meal. Or, order an appetizer in place of an entrée and add a small salad.

### Eating

**Eat slowly.** It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message from your stomach that you are no longer hungry. Fast eaters often are overeaters, while slow eaters tend to eat less and are still satisfied.

## Eating Out with Kids

**Choose a restaurant that caters to children.** This will increase the likelihood that a restaurant has a healthy children's menu that includes smaller portion sizes and meals designed to provide ample nourishment for smaller bodies.

For new foods, offer a bite or two from your order. Otherwise, let kids order their familiar favorites when they eat out. Pick two or three suitable menu items and then let your child pick one. Substitute healthier sides in place of fries, such as carrots or apple slices, and order plain foods with sauce on the side.

Calcium is important at all ages, but especially for growing bones. To get more calcium, opt for low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk for a beverage, or add a slice of cheese to their sandwich. Choose dairy-based desserts such as yogurt or a smoothie.

Restaurants may be intimidating to people trying to stick to a healthy diet, but with preparation and confidence, you can enjoy your restaurant meal without abandoning healthy eating.

## My Plate







