

Eat Smart: Portion Control

Why consider portion control? The amount of calories you consume each day affects your weight and health. Larger food portions will usually contain more calories. Over-consumption of calories may lead to weight gain and it is clear that being overweight can increase your risk for weight-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

In addition to focusing on balanced meals that contain a variety of foods, embracing suitable portion sizes is an important step in achieving an overall healthy lifestyle.

What should you do when you know your portions have exceeded your goal?

It's very easy to overdo portions and eat more than you need, especially when dining out or on special occasion. It's important to recognize these occasions by balancing a day where you may overeat with increased physical activity (take more steps and track this with your step counter) or simply eat less at the next meal. Most importantly, remember that your total diet and exercise regime balanced over several days is what counts.

What is the difference between a portion and a serving?

A portion is the amount of food you choose to eat and a serving is the standard unit of measure. The portion often contains more than the serving size which means you can consume more calories. The Nutrition Facts label can help you understand the appropriate amount of a particular food.

How can you watch your portion size?

- Place food on smaller plates to give the eye appeal of more food.
- Incorporate vegetables every lunch and dinner. Vegetables are delicious, packed with nutrition, often low in calories, and provide bulk and fiber.
- Select frozen prepared meals that have portion control built right in.
- Select single-serve portions for snacks and desserts. Use the food label to ensure you're accurately selecting your portion.
- If you select a food from a large container or

bag, serve one portion and put the rest away.

- Eat slowly and enjoy your meals. Research shows it takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to signal that it's full.
- Keep snacking to a minimum. If you choose snacks, try to select fresh fruits or vegetables.

Five quick portion control tips:

- 1 Use the food label to identify serving sizes and stick to one serving.
- 2 Replace a can of soda with a diet soda or bottled water.
- 3 When dining out, share a meal or take home half of your meal to enjoy the next day.
- 4 Make sandwiches open-faced (eliminating one slice of bread).
- 5 Learn to approximate portions (visualizing the portion cues below or a portion controlled frozen prepared meal tray can help you to do this) so that you can make smart food choices.

Portion Cues	
Deck of cards =	3 oz. meat, fish, or chicken
Baseball =	1 cup cooked pasta or rice
CD =	1 serving bread
Fist =	1 serving fruits or vegetables
Thumb =	1 serving cheese (about 1 oz.)