Portion control when eating out

Controlling portions is particularly important when eating out because many restaurants serve more food than one needs in one meal. While controlling portions may be easier to manage at home, many of us occasionally eat out. Here are a few tips to help you control portions when eating out.

• Share a meal with a friend, or take half of it home.  

• Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets.  

• Order one or two healthy appetizers or side dishes instead of a whole meal. Options include steamed or grilled—instead of fried—seafood or chicken, a salad with dressing on the side, or roasted vegetables.  

• Ask to have the bread basket or chips removed from the table.  

• If you have a choice, pick the small-sized—rather than large-sized—drink, salad, or frozen yogurt.  

• Stop eating and drinking when you’re full. Put down your fork and glass, and focus on enjoying the setting and your company for the rest of the meal.

Other portion control tools

Containers and utensils

There are a few other aspects of your eating environmental you can change to create healthy defaults that will help you control portions. Making these changes in your surroundings will help you reduce your calorie intake and better control your portions. You can use tall, thin, and small volume glasses and mugs, smaller diameter and volume plates, bowls and serving utensils, plates with rims.

Use your hand

Your hand can help you measure the right amount of food to eat. Use your hand to measure portion sizes.

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References:


Portion Control Strategies

Portion Size
Eating right is not only about what you eat, but how much. The amount of food you choose to eat for a meal or a snack is called a portion. Controlling food portions can help you manage your weight. It’s important to understand the difference between serving size and portion size. A serving is measured a recommended amount of food such as a cup, a slice or a bowl. However, a portion size is the amount of food you actually eat in one sitting.

Portion Distortion
Portion distortion is when you perceive large portion sizes as healthy and appropriate amounts to eat for a meal or a snack. Understanding portion distortion is important because it plays a major role in weight management. Portion distortion can lead to a substantial increase in energy intake and has been shown to have a role in the development of obesity and overweight. Finding effective ways to consume portions appropriate for your individual energy requirements can be challenging. In fact, studies have shown that most people have limited abilities to estimate and control portion sizes. Here are a few effective and easy to implement strategies to help you when eating out or at home.

Portion control when eating in
Studies show that these strategies are very effective in helping children and adults control the amounts of food and beverages they consume. Here are a few potential environmental strategies for improving portion control at home.

- Take one serving according to the food label and eat it off a plate instead of out of the box or bag.
- Avoid eating in front of the TV, while driving or walking, or while you are busy with other activities.
- Focus on what you are eating, chew your food well, and fully enjoy the smell and taste of your food.
- Eat slowly so your brain can get the message that your stomach is full, which may take at least 15 minutes.
- Eat fewer high-fat, high-calorie foods, such as desserts, chips, sauces, and prepackaged snacks.
- Buy snacks, such as fruit or single-serving, prepackaged foods, that are lower in calories. Divide bigger bags or boxes into single-serve packages so you aren’t tempted to overeat.
- Eat meals at regular times. Leaving hours between meals or skipping meals altogether may cause you to overeat later in the day.
- Buy snacks, such as fruit or single-serving, prepackaged foods, that are lower in calories. If you buy bigger bags or boxes of snacks, divide the items into single-serve packages right away so you aren’t tempted to overeat.