

What's a Healthy Portion?

Food portions are larger than ever these days—usually much more than you need. The recommended serving size is enough. But how much is that? These tips will help keep your portions, as well as your waistline, right-sized.



Here are some tips to help you keep your portions under control:

- Teach your children portion size by relating food to everyday items. For example, a deck of cards is equal to a serving of meat, fish, or poultry. An apple or serving of fruit is about the size of a tennis ball. **Please note:** For young children, use the palm of their hand as an indicator of portion size



- Teach your children the concept of the divided plate. Think of a plate divided into four equal sections. Use one of the top sections for protein, and the other one for starch, preferably a whole grain; fill the bottom half with veggies (none of the foods should overlap or be piled high).
- Check the label on your food to see if it meets some basic needs in your diet, like calcium or Vitamin C; if it's not "good" for you, eat less of that food.
- Check the serving size and remember that if you eat more than one serving, you are eating more calories.
- Avoid eating directly out of the package. Try putting snacks into a small bowl or snack-size baggie.
- Eat three meals a day; this way you won't stuff yourself if you have skipped a meal.
- Serve food on smaller plates.
- Serve meals from the stove. This tip will keep you from feeling tempted to eat more when you are not hungry.
- Skip the "clean plate" club. Instead, encourage your children to start with smaller portions and eat until they are satisfied.
- At restaurants, ask for a lunch-size portion or share your meal.
- Role model the behaviors that you want your children to develop.

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