



Portion Distortion, Beverages & Hydration

We often hear about “watching your portion size”, but what exactly is a portion? That can be a bit tricky to figure out given the extreme portion distortion in today’s society. For example, a 3 inch bagel used to be a standard portion, but today bagels are often 6 inches or more with an additional 200 calories. Twenty years ago a portion of French fries was 2.5 oz. Today it is 7 oz. and 400 more calories. Pop was 6.5 oz. but now 20 oz. and 165 calories more. The American idea of how much should go on our plate or in our glass has drastically enlarged, and research shows people unconsciously eat more when given bigger portions.

The following table shows guidelines of how much of different foods count as one serving in each food group. This helps us determine how many *servings* may be in a *portion*.

FOOD GROUP	Fruit	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Dairy
1 SERVING =	½ c. fresh, ¼ c. dried, ½ c. (4 oz.) juice	½ c. raw or cooked, ¼ c. (4 oz.) juice, 1 c. raw leafy greens	1 slice bread, 1 c. cereal, ½ c. cooked pasta, oatmeal or rice	1 oz. meat, ¼ c. beans, 1 egg, ½ oz. nuts, 1 T. peanut butter	1 c. milk, soymilk or yogurt, 1 ½ oz. cheese

Consuming recommended sized portions is an important change a person can make to reach and maintain a healthy weight. Measuring portions doesn’t have to involve scales, measuring cups and spoons. Comparing food to the size and shape of common household objects, as shown in the graphic, gives a good frame of reference. (Here is an additional helpful handout: [portion-control-guide.pdf \(webmd.com\)](http://www.webmd.com/portion-control-guide.pdf))

Along with the expansion of portions comes the expansion of the dishes we use. A helpful way to trick our minds into recognizing adequate portions is to use a smaller plate, bowl and glass.



Other tools to help keep portion sizes in perspective are MyPlate and the Nutrition Facts panel on food labels. MyPlate is a great visual based on a 9-inch plate. The plate is divided in half and then approximately half again so there are 4 sections. Half the plate should be filled with non-starchy vegetables and fruits, a little over another quarter with grains that include at least half whole grains, the last quarter with protein and then a side of dairy.

The Nutrition Facts panel can help us identify both portion size and ingredients in our foods. The top of the label lists serving size, number of servings, and calories per serving. The nutrients listed are based on the serving size. Pay close attention to the number of servings. Say you buy

a muffin with 250 calories and 10 grams of fat per serving. The muffin is labeled as two servings. If you eat the whole muffin, you will have consumed 500 calories and 20 grams of fat.

Portion control is also important when it comes to some of the ingredients in the foods we eat. Most prepared foods and beverages contain large amounts of sodium, sugar, and/or fat. It is okay for these foods to be a part of our meals if we exercise portion control and moderation – eating them on occasion, not regularly. Concentrate on including most foods on your plate as fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruits (without added sugar) or 100% juice, low-fat or non-fat dairy products, whole grains, and low-fat cuts of meat. (Look for those with the terms loin and round). Choose no or low calorie beverages such as water, tea, skim or 1% milk

When trying to follow a healthy lifestyle, many of us think carefully about what we eat, but not what we drink. The average American consumes a fifth of their daily calories from beverages, so carefully choosing what we drink can help us achieve a healthier lifestyle. Some common beverages can help curb our appetites, provide essential vitamins and minerals, and lower total calorie count. However, other common beverages are loaded with extra calories and added sugar. Check the Nutrition Facts Label and be aware of serving sizes too. Replacing sugar-sweetened beverages with water can cut hundreds of calories per day! Drinking water before meals also helps your stomach feel full more quickly.

A general recommendation for water intake for adults is about 10 - 8 ounce glasses per day. Regularly drinking enough water is crucial to regulate body temperature, keep joints lubricated, prevent infections, deliver nutrients to cells, and keep organs functioning properly. Being well-hydrated also improves sleep quality, cognition, and mood and helps the body flush out waste and toxins. If you struggle to drink enough water try 1) keeping a reusable water bottle with you, 2) set a reminder, 3) drink a glass before each meal, when you wake up and before you go to bed, 4) flavor your water (citrus fruit, mint, cucumber, berries)

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

If any of these ingredients are listed in your beverage, you are drinking a sugar-sweetened beverage:

- *High fructose corn syrup*
- *Fructose*
- *Fruit juice concentrate*
- *Honey*
- *Sugar*
- *Syrup*
- *Corn syrup*
- *Sucrose*
- *Dextrose*

Resources:

Choose My Plate, USDA - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

American Heart Association - <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/suggested-servings-from-each-food-group>

Portion Size Guide -

http://img.webmd.com/dtmcms/live/webmd/consumer_assets/site_images/media/pdf/diet/portion-control-guide.pdf



AHW Lesson Activities

Live More, Stress Less

“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 response (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: Pick a meal and serve yourself the normal portions you typically would. Now stop and compare them to the recommended serving sizes for each food group. How do your portions compare? What changes could you make?

Option 2: Keep track of what you eat and drink for 3 days. For each food group, compare what you ate and your portion sizes to the recommendations. What did you learn about meeting the recommendations for each food group in relation to recommended servings and portion size?

Option 3: If you fall short of drinking enough water, start keeping track and use some of the tips or ideas of your own to add water into your day. What changes do you notice from drinking more water? What were the challenges of consuming more water? What are some ideas to help you overcome those challenges?