

# NEW-LIFESTYLES STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU<sup>SM</sup> SERVING SIZE FACTS

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## What are some tips for healthy eating?

People from all over the world have commented when visiting the U.S. that "everything is big in America." Generally speaking, Americans love to drive big cars, dream big dreams and live out their belief that bigger is better. Over the last 20 years, the food and restaurant industry has used this notion of "bigger is better" to restructure the portion size of the foods we eat. We are so used to seeing huge plates and heaping portions that we have lost all sense of how to visualize a proper "serving size."

As Americans, we find ourselves in the middle of an interesting predicament. On the one hand, our mothers have taught us the value of "cleaning our plates." At the same time, those "plates" are growing exponentially in size, encouraging us to consume more and more calories that we can't burn over the course of the day. Couple this phenomenon with TV-induced comas and sedentary lifestyles, and we are at the heart of the obesity epidemic we are facing today. We eat more and exercise less - a guaranteed equation for weight

gain. Restructuring our mindset when it comes to serving sizes and the portion size we choose to eat is an important first step in controlling our weight and blood sugar levels.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

### What is the difference between a portion and a serving?

A portion is the amount of food you choose to eat. There is no standard recommendation for portion size. A serving is a standardized amount used by health professionals to calculate how many nutrients and calories are in a particular food and to give advice to individuals based upon this nutrition information.

### How do you learn to know when you are full and should stop eating?

Pause while eating and ask yourself if you are still hungry. Savor each bite and take your time when eating. When eating slowly and enjoying the flavor of food, you will find that you eat less and feel full sooner. Many times, we are too busy talking or watching TV while eating that we allow ourselves to be distracted from the awareness of how much food we are actually consuming. For some, making a change in eating habits is as easy as opening your eyes to a new level of awareness.



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## What's an easy way to turn one over-sized meal into two?

Ask for a take-home container at the beginning of a restaurant meal and put half of what's on your plate in the container for lunch the next day. This will help to curb the temptation to overeat. For those exercising more self-discipline, make a conscious effort to eat only half of what is on your plate. A half-portion of the food served at a restaurant is closer to the portion size you would serve yourself at home. The truth is --no one really needs to eat a 64oz. serving of prime rib!

## What is the easiest way to learn to visualize a proper serving size?

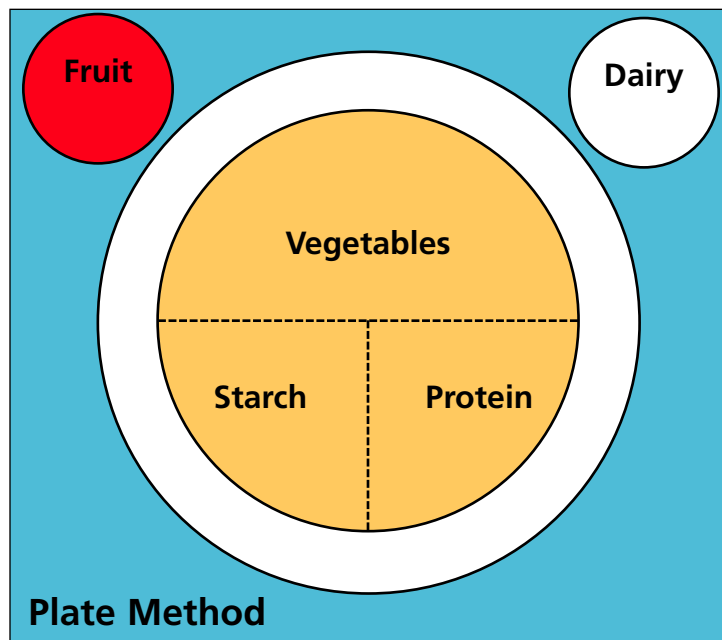
You probably have an idea of what you should be eating whether it is from the Food Pyramid or a special diet prescribed by your doctor or dietician. What you might not know is how much of each food group you should be eating. Take time to practice weighing and measuring your foods. We are so used to seeing over-sized portions that it may come as a surprise to learn that one slice of bread is considered one standard serving size of grains in the Food Pyramid.

## What is the Plate Method of visualizing serving sizes?

Since it's not always practical or easy to measure each food before eating it, here is a simple visual method for seeing if your

portions are under control. It's appropriately called the Plate Method.

Using the Plate Method for a



## How much is a serving size?

Bread	one slice	size of compact disk
Bagel	medium	size of a hockey puck
Rice or pasta	1/2 cup	size of a small fist
Corn or peas	1/2 cup	size of a small fist
Potato	medium	size of a computer mouse
Veggies, raw	1 cup	size of a woman's palm
Fruit	1 piece	size of a baseball
Milk, yogurt	1 cup	size of tennis ball
Cheese	1 oz.	size of your thumb
Meat, fish or poultry	3 oz.	size of a deck of cards
Peanut butter	2 T.	size of a golf ball

quick guide to healthy-sized portions, divide your plate into the following zones and eat accordingly. Try using a smaller plate (around 8" in diameter) to serve on--this will help keep your portions in better control. One quarter of the plate should be filled with a serving of meat or protein. Fill another quarter of your plate with grains, beans or starchy foods. On the remaining half of your plate, heap on healthy vegetables or salad. On the side, you can have a glass of low-fat or non-fat milk and a serving of fruit. Even though this guide is very general, it provides an easy visual we can commit to memory and use to prepare colorful, balanced meals.

The best part is that you don't have to deprive yourself of any particular food group and give up the foods you love. This is no fad diet. The Plate Method just changes the focus from a big plate full of mostly meat and potatoes to one that places the focus on vegetables or salad, yet gives you 1/4 of the plate for meat and the remaining 1/4 for starch or grains. It's all about proportion. A diet of

mostly plant-based foods can help prevent chronic disease and can also help maintain a healthy weight. The initial change in how you look at your plate will soon become second-nature and a permanent (and beneficial!) part of your life.

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