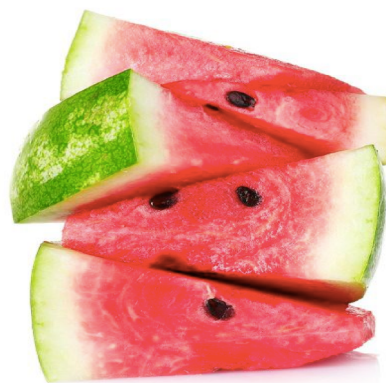




Did You Know when it comes to eating that “how much and how many” really can make a difference for your overall health?

It’s called portion control, and the Dietary Guidelines advise a commonsense approach: By all means, enjoy your food—just eat less and avoid oversized portions. It makes perfect sense, when you think about it. It’s only natural that most people eat and drink more when served larger portions. Likewise, choosing smaller portions can help you manage your weight. As part of a deliberate strategy, portion control can play an important role in helping you balance your calories.



Note that your portions at each meal can vary—but to stay within your energy needs, your daily intake should match the total amount recommended for each group. For example, one slice of bread counts as 1 ounce of grains. This doesn't mean you can only eat half a sandwich for lunch. It just means that if you eat two slices, you should count them both toward your total grain intake for the day.

One key energy balance recommendation—filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables—is also an effective way to keep portions in check. After all, there's not much room left over for the protein, carbohydrate or fat portions to be blown out of proportion!

Here's another great tip: “Shrink your plate.” Just like portions, dinner plates in homes and restaurants have mushroomed in size. Downsize to smaller plates and you'll likely enjoy a more balanced diet as well..

Follow the visual cues below and learn to eyeball serving sizes without needing to carry around a measuring cup or scale:

- 1 serving (3 oz.) of meat is the size of a deck of cards or a computer mouse.
- 1 serving (1 cup) of pasta is the size of a baseball.
- 1 serving (½ cup) of fresh veggies is the size of a baseball.
- 1 serving (½ cup) of fresh fruit is the size of a tennis ball.
- 1 serving (1 teaspoon) of butter or margarine is the size of one dice.
- 1 serving (2 Tablespoons) of peanut butter is the size of a golf ball.



Read the nutrition labels on packaged foods and make your own single-serving snack portions. For instance:

1 serving (1 oz) of grains equals 6 large tortilla chips or 5 crackers

See “What counts as a one ounce equivalent of grains?”

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/grains-counts.pdf>