Prevent Portion Distortion

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Portion sizes have gotten bigger over the past 20 years, and so have we! Larger portions add up. Just 100 extra calories per day can lead to a weight gain of 10 pounds per year. Maintaining a healthy weight is a balancing act — balance calories in with calories out.

If you downsize your portion size and feel a smaller portion looks too small ... serve it on a smaller plate so it looks larger. Note the difference in the appearance of one cup of cereal when a smaller bowl is used.

Using a smaller plate or bowl also can help you eat less according to research by professors Brian Wansink and Koert van Ittersum. Larger plates can make a serving of food appear smaller. For example, in a study conducted at a health and fitness camp, campers given larger bowls consumed 16 percent more cereal than those given smaller bowls. Their estimates of their cereal consumption, however, were 7 percent lower than the estimates of those eating from the smaller bowls.

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**Portion Distortion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 YEARS AGO</th>
<th>TODAY</th>
<th>DIFFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>333 Calories</td>
<td>590 Calories</td>
<td>257 MORE CALORIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting weights for 1 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES burns approximately 257 calories*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 Calories</td>
<td>850 Calories</td>
<td>350 MORE CALORIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing golf (while walking and carrying your clubs) for 1 HOUR burns approximately 350 calories*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup spaghetti with sauce and 1 small meatballs</td>
<td>2 cups spaghetti with sauce and 3 large meatballs</td>
<td>525 MORE CALORIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 Calories</td>
<td>1,025 Calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housecleaning for 2 HOURS AND 35 MINUTES burns approximately 525 calories*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup whole milk and sugar</td>
<td>1.5 oz</td>
<td>210 Calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>1.5 oz</td>
<td>290 MORE CALORIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mocha Coffee, 16 oz (with steamed whole milk and mocha syrup)</td>
<td>4 oz</td>
<td>500 Calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuuming for 1 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES burns approximately 290 calories*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing a car for 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES burns approximately 220 calories*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Adapted from "Portion Distortion" by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion

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MyPlate Helps You Choose Types and Amounts of Foods

The following foods and amounts are for a 2,000 calorie daily food pattern for ages 19 and over. Your calorie needs may be more or less; adjust the amount you are eating accordingly. For a more personalized plan for YOUR calorie level, based on your age, gender, height/weight, and activity level and for ages 2 through 18 — visit http://choosemyplate.gov.

**GRAINS:**
Eat 6 “ounce-equivalents.”
Make at least half your grains whole grains.

Ounce-equivalents:
- 1 slice bread
- 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal (such as flakes)
- ½ cup cooked pasta, cooked rice, or cooked cereal

**FRUITS:**
Eat 2 cups of fresh, canned, or frozen fruits.
- In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or 1/2 cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the Fruit Group
- Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice, for the benefits dietary fiber provides

**VEGETABLES:**
Eat 2½ cups of fresh, frozen, canned vegetables, or an equivalent amount of dried/dehydrated vegetables.
- Note: 2 cups raw leafy greens = 1 cup of vegetable

**DAIRY:**
Consume 3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk (1%) or equivalent Dairy Group foods.

1-cup equivalents:
- 8 oz milk
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1½ oz natural cheese
- 2 oz processed cheese
- 8 oz calcium-fortified soy beverages

**PROTEIN FOODS:**
Eat 5½ oz (or equivalent) of lean meat, poultry, or fish.

1-ounce equivalents:
- 1 oz meat, poultry, or fish
- ¼ cup cooked beans or peas (does not include green beans and peas)
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter or almond butter
- ½ oz of nuts or seeds
- ¼ cup (about 2 oz) of tofu
- ¼ cup roasted soybeans

Keep an Eye on Your Portion Sizes

Here are some ways to “eyeball” food portion amounts:

1 cup =

½ cup =

1 teaspoon = tip of a thumb to the first joint

1 tablespoon = 3 thumb tips

1½ ounces of cheese = 4 stacked dice

3 ounces cooked meat, or poultry = a deck of cards

3 ounces grilled/baked fish = checkbook

REFERENCES:
- Choose MyPlate at http://ChooseMyPlate.gov
- Portion Distortion Quiz, Dept. of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health, and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at http://app2010.nhlbihin.net/portion
- Rethink Your Drink, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/drinks.html
- Selected Messages for Consumers, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at www.choosemyplate.gov/print-materials-ordering/selected-messages.html

For more information about healthy eating, visit http://food.unl.edu

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