

Walk
NEBRASKA**Are Your Portions the Right Size?**

As we think about balancing our calorie consumption with our physical activity, we first need to look at how much we are eating. This might be the factor that can be adjusted to help keep our weight under control. Here are some facts about portion size:

- **What is the right portion size?** Use www.MyPyramid.gov and “Get a personalized plan” to find out how much of each food group you need each day. Further down on the same web page, each food group has a chart with the portion size listed for foods in that group. Compare that amount with what you usually eat. Does it need to be increased or reduced to get the correct portion size?
- **Portion control at meal time.** To reduce the temptation of second and third helpings, serve the food on individual plates. Keep the excess out of reach and consider using smaller plates. This makes the plate look full and may keep you from accidentally overeating.
- **Portion control when eating out.** Restaurants are serving more than a single portion. They want their customers to get their money’s worth and leave feeling full. Instead of trying to clean your plate when eating out, share your meal with a family member or friend or ask for a to-go box and split your meal before you start eating.
- **Out of sight, out of mind.** People tend to consume more food when it is readily available. Here are a several tips to make your home “portion friendly.” Move healthier foods to the front of the cupboard or refrigerator – eye level. Store less healthy ones, like cookies, chips or ice cream, on a high shelf or to the back of the freezer. Instead of having a candy dish, try using a fruit bowl.
- **Beware of large packages.** The larger the package, the more people consume. Try repackaging food in large container into smaller portions. Then, eat from the smaller container, not from the big package, especially when watching TV.
- **Spoil your dinner with a healthy snack.** A healthy snack like a piece of fruit, small salad, or a handful of nuts, before a meal, prevents overeating at meal time and helps keep portion size under control.

Check out the Portion Distortion Quiz at <http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion/> from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute to see how portion sizes have changed over the years. This will also help you determine proper portion sizes.

Sources: www.MyPyramid.gov, www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/portion_size.html

Know how. Know now.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.