

Does your family know what a portion really looks like?

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How much you eat is just as important as the foods you choose. Today's portion sizes for many foods and beverages are two to five times larger than when the item was first sold in the marketplace. Therefore, it is important to read food labels for the serving size and the number of servings per container. Many individually packaged items contain more than 2.5 servings per container. This means that if an item contains 2.5 servings and the Nutrition Facts label reads 200 Calories per serving, than the package actually contains 500 Calories. With the overwhelming increase in portion sizes and the epidemic of obesity that our nation faces, we need to make ourselves and our families aware of what an *actual* portion size looks like. Below is a table with everyday items that you and your family can use to measure out a proper portion:

Food	Serving Size	What it Looks Like
Meat	3 ounces	Deck of cards
Fish	3 ounces	Checkbook
Cheese	1 ounce	4 dice
Peanut butter	2 Tablespoons	Ping-pong ball
Butter or Margarine	1 teaspoon	Tip of thumb to the first joint
Baked Potato	1 small	Computer mouse
Bagel	½ of a <i>small</i> bagel	Hockey puck
Pasta or Rice	½ cup	Light bulb
Vegetables – Cooked	½ cup	Tennis ball
Vegetables – Raw/Leafy	1 cup	2 Tennis balls
Fruit	1-medium or ½ cup	Baseball
100% Fruit Juice	4 ounces (½ cup)	

Additional Tips:

- Does your family measure up? Have your family plate their normal portions, then measure each portion using measuring cups/spoons and compare to the recommended serving size above.
- Measure out the recommended serving size for each of your food items every time you eat. Eventually you will become familiar with what an actual portion looks like.
- Let your kids serve themselves and portion their own foods. If their portions are too big, be sure to teach them the correct portion size.
- Use smaller plates, bowls and cups.
- Use meal times to sit down as a family and discuss the events of the day. This will help you to eat slower and recognize the feeling of fullness. Remember, it takes 20 minutes after eating for your body to feel full.
- Do not make your kids eat everything on their plate! This is teaching children the bad habit of clearing their plate, regardless of how big the portions are.
- Use the Plate Method. Fill half of the plate with vegetables, ¼ with a meat or protein item, and ¼ with a grain or starch. (See figure on the right)

