

## Pay attention to portions

Do you feel like you keep gaining weight, even though you're eating fresh, healthy foods? It may be your portion sizes that are keeping you from reaching your goals.

## What a portion looks like

These days, it's easy to overeat without realizing it. We're being served more and more food at each meal — even our dishes are getting bigger.

Comparing real portions to everyday items is an easy way to help understand portion sizes — no measuring cup or scale needed.

Portion size:	1 portion looks like:
1 cup pasta	a tennis ball
1 cup raw veggies or fruit	a baseball
1 medium potato	a computer mouse
1 oz. cheese	2 dice
1 tortilla	a DVD
2 tbs. peanut butter	a ping-pong ball
3 oz. fish	a checkbook
3 oz. meat	a deck of cards

## Slimming mind tricks

One way to help control how much you eat is by retraining your brain to see smaller portions as just the right amount. Help your brain recognize when you've eaten enough with these simple strategies.



### Divide your plate.

Try the "healthy plate" rule: Fill 1/2 your plate with vegetables, 1/4 with a lean protein, and 1/4 with whole grains or starchy vegetables. [See what a healthy plate looks like. \(PDF\)](#) The USDA's ChooseMyPlate [🔗](#) website can also help you pick the foods and amounts that are right for you.

### Downsize your dishes.

The bigger the dish, the more we eat. Serve yourself from smaller bowls and plates.

**Drink from a tall, narrow glass.**

Serve juice, alcohol, and other high-calorie beverages in tall, skinny glasses so you feel like you're getting more while you cut calories.

**Go from package to plate.**

It can be hard to tell how much you've eaten when food goes straight from the package to your mouth. Put your food on a plate to help monitor portions.

**Healthy food isn't all-you-can-eat.**

When food seems healthier, it may seem okay to eat more of it. But these calories can add up. Stick to the serving size listed on the packages of reduced-calorie and reduced-fat foods.

**Read food labels.**

Most packages contain more than one serving of food, even if it looks like a single-serving package. Get tips for reading food labels.

**Serve from the kitchen.**

Don't put serving dishes on the dinner table. When you have to get up from the table, you'll be less likely to serve yourself seconds — or thirds.

**Skip seconds.**

A second helping can add 300 to 600 calories to your meal. If you always go back for more, cutting that extra serving means losing 3 to 4 pounds in just one month.

**Wait 20 minutes.**

It takes about 20 minutes after you start eating for your stomach to signal your brain that you're full. If you think you're still hungry, take a break for 20 minutes, then ask yourself if you really want more.

**Related links**

[Cooking better at home](#)

[Eat well on the go](#)

[Good eating guidelines](#)

[Smart shopping tips](#)

[USDA's ChooseMyPlate](#) 

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