



University of California
 Cooperative Extension
Tulare County
 Agriculture and Natural Resources



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IS BIGGER BETTER?

Most Americans believe the kind of food they eat is more important for managing weight than the amount of food they eat, according to a survey commissioned by the American Institute for Cancer Research, a private cancer charity. A common belief is eating certain types of food while avoiding others was more central to weight management efforts than eating less food.

The bottom line: Portion sizes are huge and Americans are overweight.

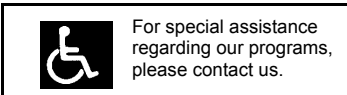
And, because many of us were raised to eat everything on our plates, we dutifully eat what's there, regardless if we are full or not.

How do you know if you are eating too much? What is a single serving? How much are we eating? How much should we eat?

Here are some tips to promote good health:

- < Pay attention to feeling of fullness. Enjoy a leisurely pace and savor each bite. Give your body a chance to feel full. Don't eat it just because it is there.
- < Fill half of your plate with vegetables. Vegetables are low in calories and high in nutrients. Try replacing vegetables for other higher calorie foods.
- < Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Walk, ride a bike, or park farther away from your destination. If you are not currently physically active, consult with your physician before beginning an exercise program.

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- < The amount we should eat is based on the number of calories our bodies need. Our caloric requirements are based on age, weight, sex and activity level.
- < Understand the size of an appropriate serving. Look at the serving size on the nutrition facts label and visualize what the serving size should look like. Measure it, then compare it to what you usually serve yourself. Listed below are examples of serving sizes and recommended daily servings from each food group.
 - L **Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta Group**—6 to 11 servings daily. A serving is 1 slice of bread, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked rice, cereal or pasta. One-half cup is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of a baseball or a paper cupcake.
 - L **Vegetable Group**—3 to 5 servings daily. A serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked vegetables, 1 cup raw leafy vegetable, or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 ounces) vegetable juice.
 - L **Fruit Group**—2 to 4 servings daily. A serving is $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of fruit juice, 1 medium apple, or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned fruit. One medium apple is approximately the size of a child's fist.
 - L **Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese**—2 to 3 servings daily. A serving is 1 cup milk or yogurt, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. natural cheese or 2 oz. processed cheese. One and a half ounces of natural cheese is approximately the size of 3 dominoes.
 - L **Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts Groups**—2 to 3 servings daily. A serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked beans, 1 egg or 2 tablespoon of peanut butter or 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. cooked lean beef, pork, poultry or fish. Two and a half ounces of meat is approximately the size of a deck of playing cards.

Central to the concept of good health, is recognition that it is not just what we eat that matters, but also how much we eat.

Source: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/columncc/cc010529.html> "Is Bigger Really Better?" June 2002.

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