

Tips to Decrease Portion Sizes

Commit to 2-3 of these changes and use them daily. Once these are habits, try adding more.

1. **Understand why you are eating.** Food is consumed for many reasons other than physical hunger. These can include stress, boredom, fatigue, unfulfillment, or just habit. Before eating, ask yourself if you are truly hungry. Try the apple test: if you don't feel like eating an apple, you're not actually hungry. Do something instead that addresses the emotion or situation. Make a list of 10 hobbies/distractions/stress-relievers to focus on instead of eating, and put these into practice. (Please download Ideas for Self Care and Why It's Vital from www.nutritiontransformation.com)

2. **Stop eating before you are full.** Eat only until the symptoms of hunger go away, not until you have any physical sensation of fullness. Weight management and blood sugar control are easiest to achieve if you eat small, frequent meals. Look at www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/page-1863947 and amihungry.com for more details on intuitive eating.

3. **Use a smaller plate.** Challenge yourself by cutting portions by one third. Use salad plates, teacups for bowls, smaller utensils etc.

4. **Wait before having a second helping.** It takes about fifteen minutes for your stomach to send satiety signals to your brain that you are no longer hungry. Take breaks while you are eating. Put your fork down between every bite. Enjoy each bite and honor the moment!

5. **Retrain your eyes.** Measure your food for a few days to get an idea of what a portion should look like. 3oz meat is about the size & thickness of a deck of cards. A serving of rice or pasta should be smaller than your fist (1 cup). 1oz cheese is size of your finger.

6. Do not keep serving bowls on the table or eat straight out of large containers. Serve yourself a small portion and put the food completely away. Enjoy your food in a different room. Keep only extra fruits and veggies readily available.

7. Control portions when you eat out. Share an entrée and get a dinner salad for each of you. Ask for a “to go” container when your order is taken. When you receive your food, put part of it in the container and put the container on the other side of the table. Order salads and smaller versions of food you normally order.

8. Eat without distractions. It is easy to overeat while you are reading, watching TV, in the car, etc. If you do eat mindlessly, good choices are nuts in the shell (Spitz and Bigs are lower sodium sunflower seed brands), fruits, or veggies. Enjoy mealtime around the table with your family to nourish the body and the mind.

9. Stay on track with a food diary. This is a great tool to increase awareness of portion sizes, food choices, and timing. It also helps to document your level of hunger/fullness on a score of 1-10, before and after eating. The goal is to stay between 4-7 on the 10 point scale for the whole day. Note emotions/situations that are influencing your intake or that are a result of your food choices. You can also document your exercise.

10. Make small changes. The process of changing habits is difficult. However, after a month or so, the new healthy habit is well established and will be easier to stick with. Do not try to make unrealistic changes that cannot last. Strict diets lead to deprivation, which sets you up for failure. Do not make any changes that you do not plan to continue for your lifetime.

11. Fill up with healthy fluids. Most do best if they drink more than twelve cups (96 ounces) per day. Best choices include water (can add sliced

lemon/lime/mango, etc), sparkling water (can add small amount of 100% juice to create substitute for soda), brewed teas (buy tea bags or shop at piquetea.com), 100% fruit juice, kombucha, premium coffee (add little sugar if needed &/or vanilla soy milk), dairy milk, soy milk, and flax milk. All items should be organic. Best time to drink is right before eating.

12. Fill your plate with extra fruits and veggies while having a smaller entrée. Studies show that people who eat at least 5 servings of fruit/veggies per day are leaner than those who don't. Higher intake of fruit/veggies is linked with lower rates of almost every health issue.

13. Establish a meal-ending ritual. Do something to signal to your body and mind that you are finished eating. Examples: chew gum, go to another room, drink another beverage. May consider filling up a tight fanny pack with potatoes and putting this on after meals to feel what you don't want.

14. Have protein with your meals and snacks. Protein helps us feel satisfied for a longer period of time. Thus, making it easier to keep portions small at our next meal. Healthy protein sources are fish, pork loin, turkey, chicken, beef/turkey jerky, bone broth, eggs, soy milk, flax milk, nuts, nut butters, seeds and beans. Again, all organic.

15. Choose high fiber carbohydrates. Fiber is filling, and high fiber foods are typically very healthy choices. Look for organic

bread, cereals, pastas, crackers, etc with at least 4 grams fiber per serving. Best if they have at least 8 grams of whole grain per serving or have the picture like a yellow postage stamp that says "whole grain".



Labeling laws only allow the stamps to be put on foods that

have enough whole grain to positively affect our health. Look for foods low in added sugar --- less than 4 grams per serving. Last updated November, 2023

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