

Gator Fuel 101



Portion Sizes

One thing that nutritionists and dietitians tell you when you are embarking on a nutritional journey is that you need to take into consideration your portion sizes. What makes up a portion? A portion of food at Chilies may not be the same as a portion of food at your neighbor's house or a portion of food on your microwave dinner. Differentiating between what makes up a portion can be very confusing!

A **portion** is the amount of a certain food, such as popcorn, that you choose to consume during a meal or eating occasion. In other words if you eat a whole bag of popcorn while watching *Sleepless in Seattle*, the amount of popcorn in the bag would be the portion size of the snack you just consumed.

A **serving size** is really just a unit of measure that is used to describe the amount of food that is recommended from each food group or nutrient value. Serving sizes are a great way to evaluate your portion sizes!

Portion control tips:

1. **Notice the size of your food.** Plate sizes and portions have increased exponentially over the past twenty years. Take a bagel for example. Twenty years ago a bagel had a three inch diameter and was about 140 calories. Today, a bagel typically has a six inch diameter and contains about 350 calories. That is a 210 calorie difference!
2. **Notice the size of your plate.** Did your mom tell you to *eat everything on your plate because there are starving children in (enter third world country here)*. Sometimes using a dessert plate instead of a dinner plate at home can make a huge difference in the amount of food you feel you need to consume to be full. Remember, the dessert plates we use today are about the same size as dinner plates were twenty years ago!
3. **Eat half when you eat out!** A lot of times when you eat out at a restaurant the portion sizes are HUGE! A good technique to save money and not get overstuffed is to share an entree with a friend. Another idea is to have the waiter put half the entree in a to-go-box before it even comes to the table. This way, you are not tempted to eat the whole huge portion all at once, and you are guaranteed lunch for the following day!
4. **Read nutrition fact labels to evaluate the amount of servings in one portion size.** For example if you consume a 20oz soda and you look at the serving size on the label it will be 2.5 servings. This means that the portion size you are consuming is 20oz and the serving size is 2.5. If you want to find the amount of calories in that soda, you have to take the calorie amount on the label and multiply it by 2.5 to find the amount of calories in your 20 oz portion of soda.

Activities:

Check out the NHLBI Portion Distortion Interactive Quiz to see how much you know about how portion sizes today compare to twenty years ago!

<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/portion.cgi?action=question&number=1>

Download your own personal serving size card so that you can visualize what a serving size should look like.

<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/servingcard7.pdf>

Play the *How to Avoid Portion Pitfalls Board Game*.

http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/portion_size_pitfalls.pdf

Quiz:

1. A _____ is the amount of food that you consume at a given meal.
a. serving b. plateful c. Waaaaaaay too much d. portion
2. In the last twenty years portion sizes have...
a. increased b. decreased c. stayed the same d. won American Idol
3. According to your personal serving size card, what is equivalent to a cup of food?
a. Hockey stick b. Soccer ball c. Baseball d. Golf ball

Websites for More Information:

http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/nutrition_for_everyone/healthy_weight/portion_size.htm

<http://www.webmd.com/diet/control-portion-size>

<http://www.mealsmatter.org/EatingForHealth/Topics/article.aspx?articleId=52>

www.mypyramid.org