

## Portion Sizes and School-Age Children

# Choosing Sensible Portions

Take the following steps to help you smartsize your servings:

### Do your homework

- Measure your food with measuring cups and spoons for one week.
- Keep a food diary for that week.
- Compare your typical servings (and calories) with the Food Guide Pyramid servings.
- For hard-to-measure foods (snacks, French fries) count out the number of pieces in one serving.

### Curb liquid calories

- The serving size for sodas, sports drinks, fruit drinks and smoothies fits in a (small) coffee cup.
- Sodas are liquid sugar sources that don't fill us up.
- Switch to diet soda or order a small (kid-sized) regular soda.
- Switch to low-fat milk or juice for a beverage with vitamins and minerals.
- Switch to water or diluted 100% fruit juice.

### Away from home

- Avoid upsizing meals at fast food restaurants.
- Eat only half the entrée: share, order a half portion or take home half.
- Don't order an entrée: have a salad and an appetizer as your meal.
- Go easy on the desserts. Take just five bites. Share or enjoy the next day.

### At home

- Use smaller plates and bowls at home.
- Buy smaller packages of snack foods.
- "Batch cook" and divide prepared recipes into the number of servings specified BEFORE eating. Save leftovers or freeze.

### Other helpful hints

- Make it satisfying. Truly enjoy your food; don't eat while doing something else. Eat slower.
- Be honest with yourself. If you eat a large portion size, eat less at the next meal.
- Always eat off a bowl or plate. Put standard servings in a bowl or on a plate. Don't eat out of the carton or bag - it's too easy to keep going.
- Trust your body to tell you when you've had enough, but remember it takes about 20 minutes for your body to send you "full" signals.

## Use what you have on hand

- A fist or cupped hand = 1 cup
- Your palm (no fingers) = 3 ounces of meat
- Your thumb = 1 ounce of cheese
- Your thumb tip = 1 teaspoon
- A handful = 1-2 ounces of snack food
- A tennis ball = 1 piece of fruit