

The great plate debate



Watch your portion sizes! The amount you eat or drink plays an important role in your stay-healthy strategy. You've probably heard the familiar term "portion distortion." Over the past 20 years, the average portion sizes have grown—just try ordering a small portion in a restaurant today. Often the plate arrives with enough food on it for two or even three people.

These ever-increasing portions are changing what Americans think of as a "normal" portion, and that affects how much we eat at home and in restaurants. Cutting back on portion size is a great way to help keep calories in check.

An exercise in portion control

A good way to see how big your portions really are is to measure the size of bowls, glasses, cups and plates you usually use. Experiment by filling them as you normally do with food or drink. Then, measure your portions with a measuring cup to see just how much you are used to eating. As you begin to reduce your portion sizes, try using smaller plates or glasses. They will still appear full. This can help you choose sensible portions.

Still aren't sure how much portion sizes have changed? Check out the chart on the back.



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An argument for smaller portions



How much food do we really need compared to the portions we often eat?
Check out these examples:

20 Years Ago		
Food	Portion	Calories
Bagel	Three-inch diameter	140
Cheeseburger	One	333
Spaghetti with meatballs	One cup sauce Three small meatballs	500
Soda	Six and one-half ounces	85
Blueberry muffin	One and one-half ounces	210

Today		
Food	Portion	Calories
Bagel	Six-inch diameter	350
Cheeseburger	One	590
Spaghetti with meatballs	Two cups sauce Three large meatballs	1,020
Soda	20 ounces	250
Blueberry muffin	Five ounces	500

Find visual tips through the *MyPyramid Food Gallery* at www.mypyramid.gov/steps/howmuchshouldyoueat.html and take the *Portion Distortion!* interactive quiz. If you keep portion sizes reasonable, it's possible to eat the foods you want—and stay healthy!