Nutrition News

Size Up Your Plate

It’s important to watch what you eat. But it’s also vital to pay attention to how much you eat. Plate size, oversized restaurant servings and the size of food packages can all impact your food intake without your knowing it.

Portion explosion: The size of our dishes has increased by about 40% in the past 50 years. The number of large-sized supermarket items has increased 10-fold since 1970. Supersized restaurant meals are 250% larger than recommended serving sizes.

People consume about 92% of what’s in front of them. So when they use large plates, fix big meals and buy in bulk, the result is increased calorie consumption and weight gain. Since supersized portions are the norm, it’s easy to mindlessly overeat.

Take control: Stay aware of invitations to overeat, such as 20-ounce glasses or packages of high-calorie, sugary snacks. Cut back on calories 6 ways:

- Use measuring cups to see how much your dishes hold.
- Eat on salad plates instead of dinner plates.
- Use teaspoons instead of soup spoons.
- Switch to smaller bowls and glasses.
- Avoid buying in bulk whenever possible.
- Split large restaurant entrées with a dinner companion.

To get started, try a 9- to 10-inch plate for your next meal.

Why eat MORE fruits and veggies?

- Color & Texture. Fruits and veggies add color, texture… and appeal… to your plate.
- Convenience. Fruits and veggies are nutritious in any form – fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice, so they’re ready when you are!
- Fiber. Fruits and veggies provide fiber that helps fill you up and keeps your digestive system happy.
- Low in Calories. Fruits and veggies are naturally low in calories.
- May Reduce Disease Risk. Eating plenty of fruits and veggies may help reduce the risk of many diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.
- Vitamins & Minerals. Fruits and veggies are rich in vitamins and minerals that help you feel healthy and energized.
- Variety. Fruits and veggies are available in an almost infinite variety… there’s always something new to try!
- Quick, Natural Snack. Fruits and veggies are nature’s treat and easy to grab for a snack.
- Fun to Eat! Some crunch, some squirt, some you peel…some you don’t, and some grow right in your own backyard!
- Fruits & Veggies are Nutritious AND Delicious!
A Cleaning Checklist for Your Healthy Kitchen

This week get ready by giving your kitchen a healthy cleaning. If you eat smarter now you’ll boost your energy, improve your health and feel better just in time for summer!

Cleaning Checklist

Your Cleaning project opens with a get-tough attitude on unhealthy foods in your cupboard and your refrigerator.

___ Easy first step- throw out moldy or outdated foods.
___ Pull out sugar loaded foods (candy, pastries) and drinks (sodas, energy drinks).
___ Gather the bags of chips and other processed high calorie, salty snacks.
___ Now – choose a couple of your absolute (unhealthy) favorites to keep in the back of the cupboard or refrigerator for a once a week indulgence and get rid of the rest.

Do a little planning for a big pay-off:
___ Sketch out some simple, healthy meals for the week. It’s important to be realistic - know what you are comfortable making and what you and your family enjoy eating.
___ Make a grocery list. Stick to it and you may save money too!

Fill Your Kitchen with Color

Refresh Your Refrigerator:
___ Green vegetables like salad greens, baby spinach, asparagus, fresh peas, green bell peppers, cucumber, avocado and zucchini.
___ Go beyond green with red and orange bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, yellow squash, mushrooms and carrots.
___ Fruits, including strawberries, blueberries, oranges, apples, grapes, lemons.
___ Low or non-fat milk, or calcium fortified soy, almond or rice milk: feta cheese, Parmesan cheese, regular and Greek yogurt.
___ Eggs, prepared hummus, fresh fish, chicken and other meats.

Fill Your Freezer:
___ Bags of plain fruit like blueberries, strawberries and mango.
___ Boxes or bags of plain vegetables – corn, peas or green beans.
___ Whole grains for convenience – cooked brown rice, whole grain tortillas, ready to bake whole wheat bread or rolls.

Update Your Cupboards:
___ Soups and broth – choose canned or boxed reduced-sodium varieties.
___ Canned no-salt added tomatoes – include diced, whole or sauce.
___ Beans, canned with no salt added. Garbanzo, black and kidney are great staples.
___ Cans of tuna, salmon or sardines to liven up your spring greens.
___ Bags of brown rice and other whole grains, like barley or quinoa are perfect for one pots.
___ Whole grain cereals including rolled oats or ready to eat muesli.
___ Whole grain breads including whole-wheat pita.
___ Vegetables and fruit needing cool, but not cold storage – onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas and pears.

Fruits & Vegetable Storage 101

Great tasting fruits and vegetables begin with proper storage at home. Just remember the FIFO rule:

First In, First Out. Use whatever is oldest first and continually rotate your stock to ensure freshness and reduce waste. The FIFO rule applies to all types of foods – fresh, frozen, canned and dried.

Fresh - Use within a few days. Some can be left at room temperature to ripen, then refrigerated.

Frozen – Store at 0° F or less. Use before the “use by” date on the package. As a rule, use within 6 months.

Canned – Check the “use by” date on the can. Most canned goods have a shelf life of about 2 years. Store at room temperature (about 75°F).

Dried – Store in a cool, dark place (warmth makes the food spoil faster). Some dried foods may be refrigerated-check the package. Use before the “Used by” date on the package. Most will last from 4 months to a year.

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EFNEP Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program