

# Size Up Your Plate

**It's important to be careful about what you eat.** But it's also vital to pay attention to how much you eat. Cues such as plate size, oversized restaurant servings and food packaging sizes 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 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 cues for overeating, such as 20-ounce glasses or packages of high-calorie, sugary snacks. It's much easier to change your environment than to change your thinking. 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, or if you must, store the contents in small containers to limit mindless munching.



**To get started, try this:** Use a 9- to 10-inch plate for your next meal. Find out more at [smallplatemovement.org](http://smallplatemovement.org).

## Portion Control

### What Is a Portion?

**A portion is the amount of food that you choose to eat for a meal or snack. It can be big or small — you decide.** Many packaged foods, such as a can of soup or bag of popcorn, may appear to be a single portion but actually contain multiple servings. A serving is a measured amount of food or drink, such as 1 slice of bread or 1 cup of milk. Serving sizes appear on the Nutrition Facts Label (see article on the back to learn more).



= 1 cup



= 1/2 cup



= 1/2 cup



= 3 oz.



= 1 oz.

# The Nutrition Facts Label:

## What You Need to Know



The FDA published final rules on the new Nutrition Facts label for packaged foods in 2016, requiring companies to comply with new labeling regulations by January 2020. Now, well into 2020, you're seeing the new label on food packages, which includes changes to how servings are classified.

Based on recent food consumption data, the serving sizes listed on food labels usually aren't based on how much food people typically consume. For example, take a large muffin; many people consume the whole thing at once, not a half or a third, thus consuming multiple servings.

**Reality check on serving sizes:** The amount that Americans eat and drink has changed. The new label will show updated serving sizes for certain foods, based on what consumers eat. Sometimes the serving size will increase, and sometimes it will decrease.

**For example, under the current regulations, a soft drink serving size is labeled 8 ounces, although a typical can contains 12 ounces and most people drink an entire can in 1 sitting.** So the updated label will reflect this common practice by changing the serving size: 1 can = 12 ounces = 1 serving = 200 calories.

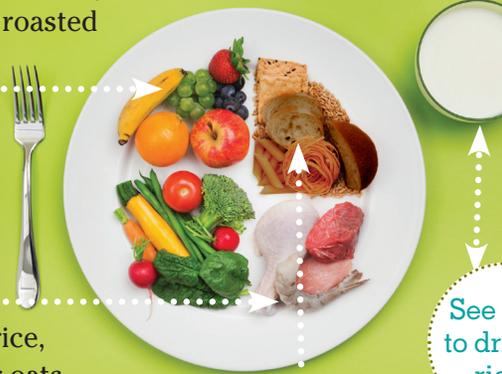
And remember, the serving size shows what people generally consume, but it's not a recommendation for how much they should consume.

For a complete picture, visit [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) to create an eating plan that meets your needs.

## Master Your Plate

When you want advice about healthy eating, food guides and charts can be confusing and difficult to use. Instead, focus on your plate at each meal. Here's what it should look like:

- **Fill ½ of the plate with vegetables and fruit.** This may be raw vegetables, salad, or steamed, broiled, roasted or stir-fried options. Anything goes!
- **Fill ¼ of the plate with protein-rich foods:** Lean meat, poultry and fish are all good options, but you can also mix things up with tofu, lentils, beans, Greek yogurt, cheese, eggs, nuts or seeds.
- **Fill the remaining ¼ with grains:** Try brown rice, 100% whole-grain pasta, quinoa, buckwheat or oats.



See what to drink at right.

## What to drink?

**What should you drink with a balanced meal?** Most plate models depict a glass of water and a glass of milk. If your ¼ protein slot is filled with dairy foods, such as cheese or yogurt, the additional milk is not necessary. And water is always a great choice!



**Sticking with this plate method** can ensure you get plenty of vegetables and fruit, and limit starchy, refined white carbohydrates or fatty meats.

**But what if you're eating a mixed meal that doesn't have clearly divided plate portions?** Think about the ingredients in your dish and decide what's missing. For example, if your salad is mostly vegetables, add some chicken breast and a scoop of cooked quinoa.



**The plate model works for breakfast, too.** Great combos include cereal, milk and fruit or eggs with toast and tomato.

