

Portion Size and Serving Size

What's the Difference?

A portion size is the amount of a single food item served in a single eating occasion, normally a meal or a snack. People often confuse portion size with serving size, which is a standard unit of measuring foods (a cup or an ounce are good examples). Portion size is the amount offered in the packaging of prepared foods, or the amount a person chooses to put on his or her plate.



For example, bagels or muffins are often sold or served in sizes that constitute at least **two servings**.

Portion sizes have increased for many food items such as hamburgers or burritos making it easy to eat two and three **servings** of food in one **portion**. Increasing the portion size of some foods increases the amounts of added sugar, fat and saturated fat that increases the number of total calories consumed.

Go Slow and Whoa is a tool to help children choose the healthier option. Portion size is an important factor in choosing the healthier option. A large portion size can change a food from a "Slow" food to a "Whoa" food. Portion sizes are key, especially for Whoa foods such as treats, sweets and drinks.

What can you do to help your children select a healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight when there are so many choices and larger portion sizes of foods from which to choose?

Meals

- Take the portion control quiz at <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/>
 - Go to mypyramid.gov to learn the recommended serving sizes for children.
 - Have children help you plan "go" foods in the menus



so they limit their "portion size" of foods with more fat or added sugar. What "go" foods would they like to eat and drink with pizza or burritos?

- When eating out, **downsize**, don't supersize. Help select menu items that are the appropriate serving size based on the children's ages.



Snacks

- Make sure plenty of "go" foods are readily available so if children are hungry they can snack on them. Fruits and vegetables are great "go" foods for snacks.
- Prepare children a serving of foods such as chips instead of offering the whole bag. An example would be preparing a baggie with 10 tortilla chips versus offering the whole bag of chips.
- Buy or portion out treats and snacks in small bags or packages. Teach your child that a small amount of sweets or a treat can go a long ways.

Drinks

- Limit portion sizes of sugared drinks, juice and sodas. All have natural or added sugar that when consumed in larger than recommended serving size can contribute to excessive weight gain.
- Offer low fat or nonfat milk or water with meals.



Teach Children

- Help children learn what foods and how much are needed for a balanced diet. One fun way they can do this is to play the Blast Off game on the USDA MyPyramid site. http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/kids_game.html