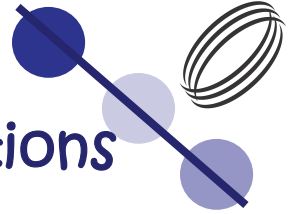


QUARTER I
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Portion Distortion: A Trend of Epic Proportions



Government studies show that America is the fattest nation in the world showing that 66% of the American population is overweight, 31% are obese, and 5% are super-obese. One of the main reasons for this is that serving sizes have doubled over the last forty years. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that average portion sizes for nearly every category of food had increased since the late 1970s, both at restaurants and at home. A report found in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* discovered that many popular foods and beverages are now manufactured in sizes up to five times bigger than when they were introduced. The portions for many items now exceed federal standards by as much as eight times!

Unfortunately eating out has subconsciously taught us to also adopt the “supersize” mentality at home - the result being that most people no longer know what a true portion size looks like. And trust me, you’ll be shocked to find out how much you are actually eating. But how do you go about getting your portions under control? A good place to start is by looking at the Food Pyramid released by the Department of Agriculture. It suggests that a healthy diet is one that includes multiple servings of various grains, fruits, and vegetables per day, while limiting the intake of saturated fat, sodium and sugar. You should also invest in a set of measuring cups and spoons and an inexpensive food scale.

Once you weigh and measure your food a few times, you’ll have a better idea of what a normal portion looks like. Another trick is to use everyday objects to visually estimate portion sizes. According to the American Dietetic Association:

- Two tablespoons of peanut butter is roughly equivalent to ping-pong ball
- Three ounces of meat is equal to a deck of cards
- A half cup of vegetables is the size of a light bulb
- One cup of pasta is about the size of a tennis ball
- One bagel is about the size of a hockey puck

Eating normal sized portions will take some getting used to, even after you master the art of portion sizing. Studies have shown that the more food we see, the more we tend to eat. So the key is to keep large portions out of sight--and therefore out of mind. Here are some tips to make it a bit easier:

- Choose foods sensibly. A single food or meal won’t make or break a healthy diet. All foods can fit into a healthy diet when consumed in **moderation** and the **appropriate portion size**.
- Keep close to nature. Fill up your cart with lots of fresh fruit, vegetables and fresh foods
- Don't allow yourself to get hungry. Keep your appetite in control with smaller meals and healthy snacks in between.
- At dinner time serve plates directly from the stove. Keeping serving dishes on the kitchen counter makes it more difficult to scoop up second and third helpings.
- If you want a snack, take a small portion and then put the container away. Better yet, buy individually packaged snacks.
- When eating out, start with soup or salad. Salads and broth-based soups can increase fullness and lead to eating smaller main-meal portions.

An extra bite here and there might not seem like much in the scheme of things. But day after day, these extra little helpings add up to a sizeable numbers of calories. According to the Surgeon General, the average adult gains one to three pounds per year by consuming as little as an extra 100 calories per day.

Understanding serving sizes is key to a successful weight-management program, and overall health. But portions alone aren’t to blame... Physical activity is also really important for good health. Regular physical activity is important not only because it helps control body weight but because it promotes a feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases. Telcom cares about your well being, so in an effort to help, we are supplying you this nutrition wheel for nutrition references.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you are a Policyholder and would like more information or additional **Nutrition Wheels for your staff.**

“Handy” Portion Sizes:



Handful = 1 - 2 oz.

Ex: 1 handful = 1 oz. nuts



Palm = 3 oz.

Ex: a cooked serving of meat



Fist = 1 Cup

Ex: 2 servings of pasta or oatmeal

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