



IS MY CHILD EATING TOO MUCH? FOR PARENTS

Support and Promote the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*

You've heard it before: portions of food in America are too large and are contributing to the rise in overweight adults and kids. *Are your children eating too much or are the portions they eat too large?* If your children eat school lunch, school breakfast or a snack from the After School Snack Program they are being served the correct portion size for their age. Offering the right-size portions is part of the program requirements for all Child Nutrition Programs and is also part of the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

But what about foods and drinks served at home and outside of school? Are your children eating the right foods, and the right portions to maintain a healthy weight? Read on for more information.

WHAT'S A PORTION OR A SERVING?

MyPlate.gov includes both general and specific recommendations about what kinds of food to eat and how much to eat. This includes portion recommendations for the main food groups which are grains, fruits, vegetables, protein, and dairy. How much to eat, within those groups depends on your age, sex, and physical activity level. Go to www.choosemyplate.gov where your whole family can get a personalized plan.

Generally speaking, younger children need less food than older children, boys may need a little more than girls, and more active people need more than less active people.



Following is a healthy daily food plan from MyPlate.gov, for a 12 year old girl who is 5 feet tall, 105 pounds, and is active less than 30 minutes a day.

- Grains—5 oz.
- Vegetables—2 cups
- Fruit—1 1/2 cups
- Dairy—3 cups
- Protein Foods—5 oz

Need more info?

You can find specifics about what a serving or a portion is within each food group at www.choosemyplate.gov

SOURCE: www.myplate.gov

HELP CHILDREN AND TEENS CONTROL PORTIONS

Most people underestimate the amount they are actually putting on their plate. (We are very used to large portions!) For example, a portion of pasta is only ½ cup of cooked pasta. That’s not very much and most kids and adults eat more than that at a meal. So how do you teach your children to control—or at least be mindful of—portion size if you don’t measure everything?

You can teach your child to fill their plate the healthy way using the MyPlate.gov graphic as a guide. You can also serve them, or teach them to serve themselves, smaller portions that are healthier and more appropriate in size.

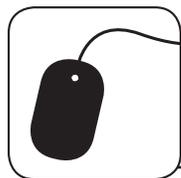
FILL YOUR PLATE FOR BEST HEALTH

Teach children to divide their plate this way for best health.

- 20% fruits
- 30% vegetables
- 30% grains, preferably whole grains
- 20% protein foods such as lean meat, beans, eggs, or fish
- A low-fat dairy serving or low-fat milk



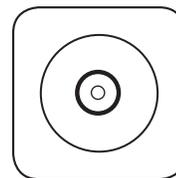
EXAMPLES OF REALISTIC PORTIONS ARE:



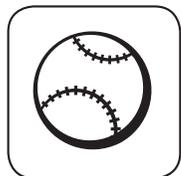
½ cup of fruit or vegetables =
a computer mouse



1 ½ oz. cheese =
2 9-volt batteries



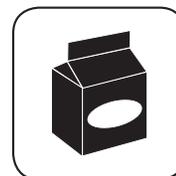
1 oz or a slice of bread =
a CD



1 cup of vegetables =
baseball
1 cup dry cereal =
baseball



2-3 oz. of meat =
deck of cards



1 cup of milk =
a small school-sized carton

OTHER IDEAS TO CONTROL PORTIONS AT HOME

AT MEALTIME

- Use a salad plate or a smaller plate for dinner. It is easier to control portion sizes with a smaller plate.
- Provide a variety of foods from each of the food groups and include milk or water as part of every meal and snack.
- Encourage your child to take one small scoop from each of the food groups. Let them serve themselves. It gives them independence and helps them begin to realize serving sizes.
- Encourage kids to have fun “coloring” their plate with colorful foods. Colorful foods are usually healthier. Offer a couple vegetables and fruits to choose from.
- Include one healthy choice from the grains food group. For example, serve just whole wheat bread, brown rice or whole wheat pasta instead of pasta and bread.
- Cut lean meats into small portions before placing them on the table.
- Avoid sodas, sugary drinks and fruit juices during meals.
- Don’t insist kids eat all their food. Learning to listen to their internal hunger clock is part of learning proper portion control.

DURING SNACKTIME

- Limit snacks to specific snack times so kids will be hungry during mealtime.
- When your child is hungry and looking for a snack serve them the amount of food that is equal to one serving. You can find this on the Nutrition Facts label. Have your child eat snacks from a plate or bowl instead of out of the bag or box.
- Don’t allow your kids to eat in front of the T.V. Research shows that they will eat more when they do this.
- Be prepared and have emergency healthy snacks on hand if your family is running late and needs a quick snack. Make your own snack bags for traveling by reading the Nutrition Facts Label and placing a single serving size into plastic bags.