



# The Skinny on Portion Sizes

Bigger isn't always better, especially when it comes to portion sizes. Standard portion sizes have increased significantly over the years, making it difficult for some to keep calorie intake under control.



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The health experts at NorthShore University HealthSystem explore portion sizes and provide portion control tips to help you navigate your way to better health.

## The Bigger Picture

Fact: Americans are gaining weight. Check out what a difference 40 years can make.

### BMI System

#### What is a BMI?

body mass index; estimates body fat based on height and weight

#### BMI Equation

$$\frac{\text{weight (lb)} \times 703}{\text{height (inch)}^2}$$

#### BMI Scale

- $\leq 18.5$  Underweight
- 18.5 - 24.9 Healthy
- 25 - 29.9 Overweight
- $\geq 30$  Obese

1971

15% of Americans were obese



2010

36% of Americans were obese



Even more shockingly, in 2010,

69% of Americans were overweight or obese



Why has our nation gained so much weight?

## Portion Sizes: Then & Now

Compare today's typical portion sizes to those from 20 years ago.



### French Fries

Then: 210 cal., 2.4 oz.  
Now: 610 cal., 6.9 oz.



### Chocolate Chip Cookie

Then: 55 cal., 1.5 in. diameter  
Now: 275 cal., 3.5 in. diameter



### Muffin

Then: 210 cal., 1.5 oz.  
Now: 500 cal., 4 oz.



### Bagel

Then: 140 cal., 3 in. diameter  
Now: 350 cal., 6 in. diameter



### Cheeseburger

Then: 333 calories  
Now: 590 calories



### Soda Pop

Then: 85 cal., 6.5 oz.  
Now: 250 cal., 20 oz.



### Turkey Sandwich

Then: 320 calories  
Now: 820 calories



### Spaghetti & Meatballs

Then: 500 calories  
Now: 1,025 calories



### Coffee

Then: 45 cal., 8 oz.  
Now: 350 cal., 16 oz.

## Why Does Size Matter?

The results of a recent American Journal of Clinical Nutrition study might surprise you.

Volunteers were given macaroni and cheese in either



On average, volunteers ate 30% more when given a 5-cup container

but reported no increase in fullness.

Surprisingly, most volunteers didn't even realize there was a difference in portion size.

## Portion Control Tips

With larger portions becoming the norm, what can you do to prevent weight gain?



Avoid serving food family style at the dinner table.



Use small dishware at home.



At a restaurant, box up half your meal before picking up a fork.

### Helpful Serving Sizes



When you don't have measuring cups on hand, just use your hand.

#### A Closed Fist (roughly 1 cup)

is a serving of:  
Pasta  
Rice  
Fruit  
Veggies



#### Your Palm Size (roughly 3 oz.)

is a serving of:  
Meat  
Fish  
Poultry



#### An Open Handful (roughly 1 oz.)

is a serving of:  
Nuts  
Raisins



#### 2 Open Handfuls (roughly 1 oz.\*)

is a serving of:  
Chips  
Popcorn  
Pretzels



#### Your Thumb (roughly 1 oz.)

is a serving of:  
Nut butters  
Cheese



#### Your Thumb Tip (roughly 1 tsp.)

is a serving of:  
Oils  
Butter  
Sugar



\*Snacks like chips and popcorn weigh less than nuts and dried fruit.

## Sources

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