

Portion Size Tips for Shopping and Cooking

An important strategy in keeping your blood glucose and weight in a healthy range is to control your portion sizes.

“Yeah, when I cook at home I use the measuring cups or the measuring spoons. I think that's very, very important.”

One way to control your portion sizes is to measure your foods after they are cooked.

This way you have a good idea of how many carbohydrates, fat and calories are in your meals. When you first start trying to control your portion sizes you may want to use a scale or measuring cups to help you learn the recommended portion. Or use dishes and glasses that you know the size of.

Measuring your foods will also help you to eyeball a healthy serving size when you don't have your measuring tools handy. Then everyday items can become your tools.

For example, a serving size of ice-cream, or is about the size of a tennis ball.

A serving size of cheese is the size of 4 dice.

And a small baked potato is the size of a computer mouse.

You can also use your hand to measure your foods and control your portions.

- 1 fist or cupped hand = 1 cup.
- 1 thumb = 1 oz or 1 tablespoon.
- 1 thumb tip = 1 teaspoon.
- 1 palm = 3 ounces meat.
- 1 tennis ball = 1 serving of fresh fruit.

Once you get the hang of measuring your foods, no matter what you choose to use, you will be able to make healthy food decisions and control your portion sizes.

If having second helpings is what increases your portion sizes, try to have a soup or salad first to help you feel fuller faster.

And try making your plate at the stove or counter. This way you avoid the temptation of a large serving bowl right in front of you.

Using large plates or dishes can sometimes be a portion size trap. You may feel deprived because your portion sizes look too small. Try using lunch or salad plates for your meal, rather than large dinner plates.

Another trick is to buy chicken, fish, turkey or other proteins pre-portioned out.

That way you automatically know you are eating the right amount of protein.

Your diabetes care team will have more tips for keeping your portion sizes in control. Meet with her to go over your strategies for making a change in the size of portions you eat.

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“Nuts, you know, that’s a go-to food for me, and that’s where measuring those out keeps me to the quarter cup, and I’ve learned that a quarter cup is enough.”

Managing your portion sizes can help you get your blood glucose and weight in your target range and keep it there.

Stick to healthy portion sizes to benefit your diabetes management –today and in the future.