

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Avoiding portion distortion gives way to healthy weight and healthy lifestyle**

Today, knowing appropriate portion sizes is becoming more difficult as commercial food industries and restaurants offer inaccurate views of recommended food helpings. This distorted outlook on food portion size can teach children improper eating behaviors and improper diet choices from a young age.

Avoiding portion distortion is vital to weight control. Fast food restaurants and conveniently packaged commercial foods have skewed perceptions of portion sizes by way of “value” menus and “supersized” meals.

You can escape serving size mishaps by cooking at home or choosing appropriately sized portions when eating out a restaurant so that you avoid over-eating.

There are several ways to provide children with proper servings during mealtime. Kids should have smaller portions of food than adults during mealtimes. Food portions should be about the size of the child’s fist. Use smaller plates for kids, and start with a small portion - kids can have seconds if they’re still hungry. Don’t force them to “clean their plate” if they’re already full.

WVU Extension specialists say if your meal follows the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s recommended serving size, your family will eat recommended portion sizes, leading to better, healthier lifestyles.

What exactly is a serving size? How are you supposed to measure each helping of food to make sure that you are eating the correct amount? The answer is simple. By relating serving sizes to everyday objects, it can be easy to ensure you’re making smart food portion choices.

For each food group, you can associate an object. A tennis ball, for example, would be the size of one serving of fruit. Three ounces of meat is about the size of a deck of playing cards. A slice of bread, half of a bagel or one-cup of cereal accounts for one serving of whole grains.

To learn more about healthy eating habits and portion recommendations, visit letsmove.gov.

Controlling portions of food is only one part of upholding healthy eating habits and heart health. The amount of calories in each serving is also an important consideration when planning meals.

High calorie foods that have increased levels of saturated fat and cholesterol can lead to severe heart problems such as stroke, heart failure and heart disease.

Reduced or low-calorie foods help create healthy eating habits. Low-calorie foods like fruits and vegetables help sustain good, physical body shape and contribute to good heart health.

Low calorie, nutritious foods paired with proper serving sizes leads to an effective diet, healthy lifestyle and overall well-being.

By supporting each other and following recommended USDA portion sizes, families can coach themselves and each other to consume fewer calories. Check USDA’s ChooseMyPlate.gov website,

where you will find exact recommendations, personal calorie guides and other healthy lifestyle information.

WVU Extension Service's Heart Health Movement is adapted from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's campaign and is targeted to help West Virginians become educated and enabled to take charge of their own health.

To learn more about ways WVU Extension uses trusted research and local experts to empower citizens to improve their health, contact your local WVU Extension Service county office or visit www.ext.wvu.edu.

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