

Smaller Plates to Help Lose Weight!

Most of us struggle to control our weight. Still, obesity continues to be a major health concern for adults and children. Many factors affect weight gain, the basic cause comes down to math – more calories taken in, through food and beverages, than calories being burned by our bodies.

It is not just that we eat more than we burn through physical activity. Instead, it has a lot to do with the size of what we choose to eat and drink. “Portion size” refers to the amount of food appropriate for a person to eat or drink, depending on daily calories and nutrient needs. Portions of most commonly eating foods in the U.S. have increased steadily since the 1970s and parallel’s our nations’ rising obesity rates

Eating less is one key to weight-control success. Here are some simple steps you can use to control portions.

- **Use a smaller plate.** A typical plate is 10 inches. Try using a 8 or 9 inch plate or a salad plate. By using a smaller plate, you will visually look like you are eating a lot of food, when you are eating a smaller amount.
- **Split or share a meal when eating out.** Share with your spouse or a friend. If you prefer having your own plate, cut your portions in half and save the rest for another meal.
- **Choose small, one and for all.** If splitting a meal doesn’t work, order your meal from the appetizer list or children’s menu. You will typically get a smaller portion and save calories.
- **Portion bulk buys.** When you get home from the grocery store, portion out your buys in to smaller portions. Divide snack foods into single containers or plastic bags, portion out meats and grains into smaller portions.
- **Use MyPlate to eat healthy.** Use the MyPlate strategy, fill half your plate with nutrient packed, low-calorie fruits and vegetables. Their fiber content will help you feel full longer. Make one fourth of your plate protein and one fourth grain. Add a low-fat dairy choice.
- **Eat mindfully.** It is important to take time to focus on eating. Try to avoid tasks that distract your during meals and snacks. Often, we tend to eat more than we realize when we aren’t paying attention and consume more calories.

Over time, practicing these simple steps can help form healthy habits, and help make those scales move to a healthy weight.