

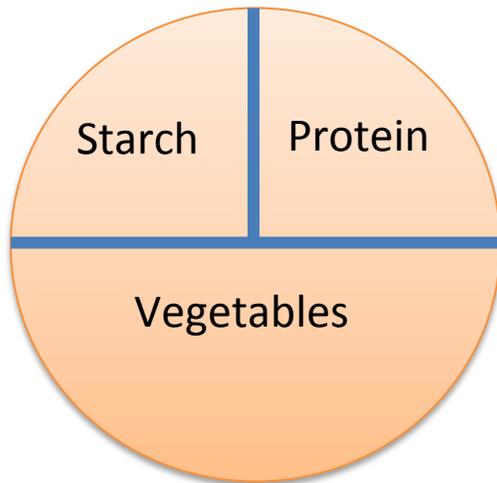
All About Portion Sizes

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One of the most important things to consider when we are eating is how much.

The Plate Method

Following the plate method is a simple way of ensuring your food groups and portions are balanced.



Try to aim for this pattern of eating at most of your meals. Fill half your plate with vegetables. Fill one quarter of your plate with starches (bread, pasta, rice, corn, potato, etc.). Choose whole grain starches most often. Fill one quarter of your plate with protein (chicken, pork, beef, turkey, fish, beans or lentils). Choose lean meats and plant sources (beans and lentils) of protein most often.

If you're having a mixed meal (curry, casserole, pasta, etc.), make sure your food groups are all represented.

Another helpful way to keep your portions controlled is to use your hands as a guide.

Food item	One Serving
Protein (beef, chicken, fish, etc.)	Palm of your hand
Fruit or starch (pasta, rice, potato, corn)	Fist of your hand
Vegetables	As much as you can hold in two open hands
Added fats (butter, margarine, oil)	Tip of your thumb

Other portion control tips:

- ✓ Use a measuring cup once to see how much you normally put on your plate. Adjust if needed and eyeball the amounts in the future.
- ✓ Eat snack foods out of a bowl instead of the bag/box so you can tell how much you've eaten.
- ✓ Use smaller dinner plates. Studies show this helps you eat less.
- ✓ [Use Canada's Food Guide to learn about portion size for each food group](#)
- ✓ Make sure you feed yourself every 4-6 hours. Going longer than 4-6 hours may cause you to eat larger portions than you normally would because you are very hungry.

Mindful Eating

Another way of controlling your portions is to practice mindful eating. Part of mindful eating is becoming aware of your hunger and fullness cues to guide when to begin and end eating.

- ✓ Pause before reaching for a snack or meal. Ask yourself if you are really hungry at that time, or if there is another reason for wanting food. Sometimes we eat for emotional reasons (boredom, sadness, happiness) or because we are craving something specific (salty, sweet, crunchy).
- ✓ Instead of immediately reaching for seconds at dinnertime, pause and think about if you are still hungry. Remember it takes 20 minutes for you to feel fullness.
- ✓ [Visit this page for more information on mindful eating.](#)