



NUTRITION NEWS!

Wallingford-Swarthmore
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Elementary Nutrition Education Newsletter

Estimating Portion Size

Since most people do not have a scale readily available to measure the sizes of portions they consume at each meal or snack, being able to estimate how much food you are eating is helpful in order to make sure you are not over eating.

By using common, everyday items such as a deck of cards, a light bulb, golf ball, or even your hand, we can begin to closely estimate the size of portions we are served.

From this, we can begin to know how many calories we are consuming at each meal and throughout the course of the day.

Here are some everyday comparisons to help you figure out your serving sizes:

- A teaspoon of margarine is the size of one of a pair of dice.
- Three ounces of meat is the size of a deck of cards.
- One cup of pasta is the size of a baseball.
- An ounce and a half of cheese is the size of four stacked dice.
- One-half cup of fresh fruit is the size of a baseball.

Portion Distortion

Anyone eating on the run or at restaurants has probably noticed that food portions have gotten larger. Average portion sizes have grown so much over the past 20 years that some portions are called "super sized". Some have grown so much that they provide enough food for at least two people.

These growing portion sizes are changing what Americans think of as a "normal" portion at home, too. We call it **portion distortion**.

See these examples of how **growing portion sizes** over the past 20 years can lead to **increased calories**:

	20 years ago		Present	
	Portion	Calories	Portion	Calories
Bagel	3" diam.	140	6" diam.	350
Cheese-Burger	1	333	1	590
Soda	6.5 oz	82	20 oz	250
Blueberry muffin	1.5 oz	210	5 oz	500



6 Ideas for Low Sugar Drinks

Plain water is the best calorie-free beverage—and when it comes from the tap, it costs a fraction of a penny per glass. But for some people, plain old water may be just too plain. Here are some ideas for low and no-sugar beverages that you can prepare at home:

1. Infused Water

You can find fancy flavored waters in the grocery store, including some that are free of sugar or artificial sweeteners. Spas also serve water that has been flavored with herbs, fruits, or even vegetables. But you can easily make your own naturally-infused spa water at home. Try adding any of the following to a cold glass or pitcher of water:

- Sliced citrus fruits or zest (lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit)
- Crushed fresh mint or other herbs
- Peeled, sliced fresh ginger or sliced cucumber

2. Tea

Black or green, caffeinated or decaf, leaf or herbal, hot or cold, tea is an excellent choice for a calorie free beverage. Adding a teaspoon of sugar or honey only adds about 15 calories to the cup. Some teas taste sweet to the palate even without adding any sugar: Try Japanese roasted barley tea (Mugi Cha), fruit-flavored herbal teas (mango, blueberry), or teas that feature cinnamon, vanilla, or other "sweet" spices. Black and green teas are also rich in antioxidants, flavonoids, and other biologically active substances that may be good for health.

3. Coffee

Coffee is calorie free, as long as you don't load it up with cream and sugar. Take a pass on the coffeehouse confections that are topped with whipped cream and drizzled with sugar syrup as those can have 300 to 400 calories per extra-large cup. If you want to add one teaspoon of sugar to a plain cup of coffee, that's no problem

4. Sparkling Water with a Splash of Juice

Sparkling juices that are sold ready-made are often mostly juice, and may have almost as many calories as sugary soda pop. Instead, make your own sparkling juice at home with 12 ounces of sparkling water and just an ounce or two of juice. For a flavor twist, add sliced citrus or fresh herbs.

5. Fresh Fruit Coolers

Store-bought or cafe smoothies are marketed as "health" foods, but they are often loaded with sugar and high in calories—some have as much as 300 calories in a 12 ounce serving. Try making a tasty fresh fruit cooler instead. There's no added sugar and just a small amount of fruit, so this drink is only about 18 calories for each 12-ounce serving.

- 1/2 cup of ice
- 3/4 cup of sugar-free sparkling water
- 1/3 cup of melon or berries
- Chopped mint leaves or citrus slices (optional)

Place ice, sparkling water, and fruit in a blender. Blend until slushy, pour into a glass and garnish with mint or citrus slices. Serves 1.

6. Low Sodium Broth or Miso

There's no rule that says we must satisfy our thirst with something sweet. Low-sodium broth can give your body the fluid it needs and can be a savory and satisfying alternative to a sweet drink. For the healthiest choice look for a broth that has less than 200 milligrams of sodium per serving. Miso, the Japanese fermented soybean paste used in soups, can be quite salty, so look for lower-sodium varieties and use it sparingly.