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STEPAHEAD
TO A HEALTHY LIFE

Eating Less and Loving It!

"Enjoy your food but eat less" and "avoid over-sized portions" are key recommendations of the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 from the USDA and DHHS. Obesity has been increasing in the US for decades, but this is the first time that the Dietary Guidelines, which are updated every 5 years, have included messages of this type.

This sounds like advice that should be easy to follow. But portion size (the amount of a food you eat) has been increasing steadily over the past 20 years. Slices of pizza, bagels, muffins, and sodas are among the foods that are now commonly eaten in much larger portions than before. Experts say that our sense of a healthy portion is distorted. We may not realize how much we are actually eating, and that can contribute to weight gain.

A serving is a standardized amount of food. All the information on the Nutrition Facts panel of packaged foods, including calorie and fat content, is for one serving. Even a small package may have more than one serving. One large muffin can have as many as three servings; check the nutrition facts label before you start eating it!

There is some interesting research on factors that influence how much people eat, including supply and variety of foods served, social and physical environment while eating, and size and shape of dishes, glasses and utensils. Brian Wansink's book "Mindless Eating" summarizes some of this research.

Here are ways to manage how much you eat:

- If you buy food in bulk or family-sized packages, repackage the food into smaller packages.
- Measure your food with measuring cups or kitchen scales before you prepare it.
- Use smaller plates, bowls, and spoons.
- Use tall, skinny glasses, not short & wide ones.
- Use a plate or bowl for snacks instead of eating out of a bag or box.
- Use single-serving packages.
- Don't serve higher calorie foods family-style; put servings on plates and put any leftovers away before you start to eat.
- Don't eat second helpings.
- Keep your distance: people tend to eat more when a source of food is close at hand.
- Eat slowly. Put down your fork between bites.

Recipe of the Week : Citrus and Spinach Salad

Serves 4. From Jane Brody's Good Food Book

This is just one of many good ways to take advantage of terrific citrus fruit in season now!

Dressing:

½ cup grapefruit juice
2 Tablespoons prepared mustard
¼ cup honey
2 Tablespoons poppy seeds
2 Tablespoons grated onion
¼ tsp. salt if desired
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Combine dressing ingredients in a jar or small container; chill.

Salad:

4 cups packed spinach leaves, well washed
2 cups citrus sections (orange or a combination of orange and grapefruit.)
½ cup red onion rings.

At serving time place salad ingredients in a salad bowl. Toss with about ¼ cup of the chilled dressing.

Nutrition information (with dressing):

Calories: 111 | Total Fat: 4g | Saturated fat: .5g
Fiber: 3g | Protein: 2g

Tip of the Week

Visit museums, a zoo, or an aquarium. You and your family can walk for hours and not even realize you are getting some exercise! Check with your public library for discounted or free admission to attractions across Massachusetts.

To learn more visit www.stepaheadprogram.com
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