

## March: National Nutrition Month

### Are Three Squares a Day the Only Healthy Way? What Is the Healthiest Eating Pattern for You?

Three square meals is the eating pattern you're taught from childhood. But is three really the ideal number of times you should eat every day? Not necessarily. In fact, for some people, eating five or six times a day keeps blood sugar more even and can help with weight control.

#### What Is a Mini Meal?

It is important to differentiate the mini meal from nutrient deficient, high carbohydrate, high fat snacks. A mini meal should be well balanced, containing fiber, protein, and small amounts of fat—the combination of which has been shown to be more satiating, leading to longer lasting hunger satisfaction. In contrast, people who snack on sweet, fatty foods consume more calories and have a higher likelihood to be overweight. For example, in a study of normal weight adults, one group instructed to eat an after dinner mini meal of cereal with low fat milk reduced their total intake of calories and lost nearly two pounds in four weeks. This was compared to very little weight loss in the control group who was told to eat their usual after dinner snacks. The researchers speculate that the more balanced mini meal of cereal and milk enabled participants to have better portion control and reduce intake of other higher calorie snacks. A mini meal should consist of a wide variety of foods from several of the food groups. This also ensures an adequate intake of nutrients including vitamins and minerals.

#### Finding an Eating Pattern That Works For You

Everyone's needs are different based on physiology and lifestyle. Finding an eating pattern that gives you the nutrients and energy you need is key to a healthy and active life. If you currently eat three meals a day but find you go into a mid-morning slump or mid-afternoon food delirium, smaller more frequent meals may be right for you. Or, if you find yourself constantly hungry and grazing throughout the day, three substantial meals with fiber, carbohydrates, protein, and a small amount of good fat may be what you need. When deciding to try a new eating pattern, make sure to stay on the new schedule for at least two weeks to let your body adjust. It is also important that whatever schedule you choose that you try to maintain a consistent eating pattern. The successful members of the National Weight Loss Registry, which include those who have maintained an average weight loss of 15 pounds for over five years, report eating breakfast regularly and maintaining a consistent eating pattern on weekdays and weekends.

**Source:** Authors: Shara Aaron, MS, RD and Monica Bearden, RD  
Copyright © 2011 EBSCO Publishing

### Wise Choices: Good to Go

Pack a healthy lunch kids want to eat:

- Shrink the portion size and up the variety.
- Splash a few drops of lemon juice on sliced fruit to keep it fresh and appetizing.
- Make a sandwich with turkey or other lean filling on multigrain bread. Try using mustard or a low-fat mayonnaise instead of the high-fat variety.
- Freeze juice pouches and boxes so they'll stay cold.
- Re-use containers. It's greener and helps keep food bruise-free.

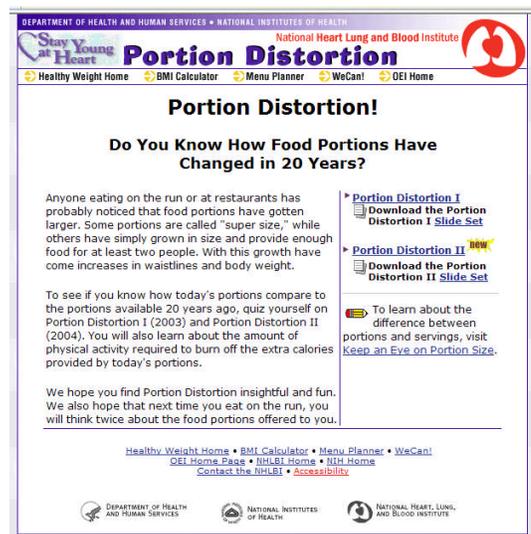
**Source:** *NIH News in Health*

Copyright © September 2008 National Institutes of Health  
<http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/pdf/NIHNIH%20Sep08.pdf>

### Portion Distortion Quiz

Anyone eating on the run or at restaurants has probably noticed that food portions have gotten larger. Some portions are called "super size," while others have simply grown in size and provide enough food for at least two people. With this growth have come increases in waistlines and body weight.

To see if you know how today's portions compare to the portions available 20 years ago, quiz yourself on Portion Distortion I and Portion Distortion II. You will also learn about the amount of physical activity required to burn off the extra calories provided by today's portions. A screenshot of the site's homepage is below. Navigate to <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/> to take the quiz.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Portion Distortion Quiz. At the top, it features the logo for the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute and the text "Stay Young at Heart". Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: Healthy Weight Home, BMI Calculator, Menu Planner, WeCan!, and DEI Home. The main heading is "Portion Distortion!" followed by the sub-heading "Do You Know How Food Portions Have Changed in 20 Years?". The main text explains that food portions have gotten larger and provides a link to "Download the Portion Distortion I Slide Set" and "Download the Portion Distortion II Slide Set". There is also a link to "Keep an Eye on Portion Size". At the bottom, there are links for "Healthy Weight Home", "BMI Calculator", "Menu Planner", "WeCan!", "DEI Home Page", "NHLBI Home", "NIH Home", "Contact the NHLBI", and "Accessibility".

**Sources:** National Heart Lung and Blood Institute; NIH; DHHS  
Copyright © 2010 National Heart Lung and Blood Institute  
<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/>

## March: National Nutrition Month

### Getting to the Heart of a Healthful Diet

A heart-healthy lifestyle is not about deprivation. It is about eating more—more fruits, more vegetables, more whole grains, and more unsaturated fats. When you focus on putting more of these nutrient-rich foods in your diet, there is naturally less room for the not-so-heart-friendly foods—those high in saturated fat and low in nutrients.

Healthy eating habits can help you reduce three of the major risk factors for heart attack:

- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Excess body weight

So how does this translate into your grocery list and onto your dinner plate? To help you eat the heart healthy way, <http://www.heart.org/> has created some guidelines. By 2020, the association hopes to improve the heart health of Americans by 20%, and reduce death due to stroke and heart disease by 20%. Follow these dietary guidelines to improve and/or maintain your heart health:

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. Eat at least 4½ cups each day.
- Eat a variety of fiber-rich whole grains. Eat at least three 1-ounce-equivalent servings a day.
- Include protein, such as fat-free and low-fat milk products, fish, legumes (beans), skinless poultry, and lean, preferably white meats. Limit red meats and processed meat. For nuts, legumes, and seeds, eat at least four servings a week. For processed meats, eat no more than two servings a week. When eating fish, choose oily fish, like salmon. Eat at least two, 3½-ounce servings a week.
- Limit foods high in saturated fat, transfat, and/or cholesterol, such as full-fat milk products, fatty meats, tropical oils, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, and egg yolks. Instead choose foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol from the first three points above. Saturated fat should be less than 7% of your total energy intake.
- Limit your intake of foods high in calories or low in nutrition, including foods like soft drinks and candy that have a lot of sugars. For sugar-sweetened beverages, do not have more than 450 calories (36 ounces) a week.
- Eat less than 1,500 milligrams of salt (sodium chloride) per day.
- Have no more than one alcoholic drink per day if you're a woman and no more than two if you're a man.

**Source:** Author: Karen Schroeder Kassel, MS, RD, MEd  
Copyright © 2011 EBSCO Publishing

### Bring Back Breakfast: A Quiz

Choose the best breakfast:

- A. Leftover cold cheese pizza and orange juice
- B. Peanut butter and banana sandwich and milk
- C. Cold cereal with raisins and soy milk
- D. Shake made with frozen fruit, milk, juice, and wheat germ
- E. A hard-boiled egg and vegetable juice

If you chose A, B, C, D, or E, then you're correct! The best breakfast is the one that you'll eat regularly (and is relatively well-balanced). Eating a healthful breakfast helps prepare your mind and body for the day ahead.

**Source:** Karen Schroeder Kassel, MS, RD, MEd  
Copyright © 2010 EBSCO Publishing

### Healthy Recipe: Pasta e Fagioli

#### Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 14-1/2 oz can no salt added stewed tomatoes, un-drained
- 1 15 oz can low sodium vegetable broth
- 3 cups water
- 1 15 oz can cannellini beans, drained
- 1 15 oz can red kidney beans, drained
- 1 cup diced green pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tsp basil leaves
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp rosemary
- 4 oz uncooked small shell pasta

#### Instructions:

Heat oil in large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat until hot; add onion and garlic. Cook until onion is translucent. Stir in tomatoes with liquid, broth, beans, parsley, basil, pepper, oregano, and rosemary. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally, and then reduce heat to low. Simmer, covered for 10 minutes. Add pasta and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes until pasta is tender. Serve immediately with whole wheat bread and side salad.

#### Nutrition Facts:

Calories 230	Total Fat 5 g
Saturated Fat 1 g	Sodium 140 mg
Total Carbohydrate 38 g	Dietary Fiber 9 g
Protein 10 g	Sugars 7 g

**Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/RecipeDetails.aspx?RecipeId=65&Search=&PageNumber=3&SortBy=TA&PerformOrSearch=-1&Fruits=&Vegetables=&MealTypes=23>