

“EAT LESS – CHOOSE YOUR PORTION WITH CAUTION”

Facts

- Overweight and obesity are affecting the majority of South Africans, especially adult women and preschool children. This is putting South Africans at risk for chronic diseases, such as heart disease and strokes, diabetes and some cancers.
- Some of the main reasons why people become overweight or obese are because they are:
 - (a) Eating large amounts of food (food portions);
 - (b) Eating high-energy foods that are high in sugar, fat and salt;
 - (c) Not eating a variety of food from the different food groups.
 - (d) Not engaging in regular physical activity

Messages about controlling portion sizes

- Eat a variety of food at each meal, in other words include foods from two or preferably more food groups at each meal.
- Meals should not be high in sugar, fat or salt. Achieve this by not adding extra fat, sugar or salt to your food when cooking or by not buying ready-to-prepare or ready-to-eat meals.
- Serve the correct portions of food onto individual plates, instead of putting serving dishes on the table. This will avoid being tempted by second or more helpings.
- Use smaller plates, bowls, and serving utensils. Plates with a darker-coloured rim can also help to eat smaller portions, since one will tend to only serve food on the lighter-coloured portion of the plate.
- Use a smaller glass to limit the amount of drinks or beverages consumed at a time. Drink lots of clean, safe water.
- Keeping excess food out of reach may discourage unintentional overeating. If you don't buy it you won't be tempted to eat it.

- Be aware that your body may only experience feeling “full” sometime after eating your meal. Therefore, eat slowly, chew properly and pay attention to your body’s internal cues to avoid overeating. Do not eat in front of the TV as this may lead to being distracted and not paying attention to signals of becoming “full” thereby leading to overeating
- Stick to regular meal and evenly-spaced snack times and do not skip meals. This means having small meals (i.e. breakfast, lunch and supper) every day with small healthy snacks in-between if necessary. Vegetable sticks or fruit and low fat or fat free yoghurt or milk are good examples of healthy snacks. Don’t eat too late at night or just before you go to bed.
- Encourage children to take a lunch box and healthy snacks such as fruit and yoghurt to school and to avoid buying meals and snacks that are high in sugar, fat and salt.
- Many restaurants serve more food than is appropriate for one person. Control the amount of food that ends up on your plate by sharing a meal with a friend or asking the waiter to put half the meal in a “doggie bag” or “take away container”. Alternatively order a salad and a starter as your main meal.
- When ordering meals from restaurants, order a small or regular portion size instead of a large portion and have salad or vegetable(s) to complete your meal.
- Limit the intake of deep-fried foods and rather choose foods that are steamed, grilled or baked.
- Limit the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (like fizzy drinks and sweetened juices) and replace with unflavoured water, milk, or tea.
- Chooses healthier low fat, low salt snack options eg: air popped corn. When eating or snacking in front of the TV, put a small amount in a bowl or container and leave the rest of the package in the kitchen.
- Snack foods that are bought in bulk should be portioned into individual-sized bags. Store large containers out of sight in a storage closet, cabinet, or garage.

- Keeping healthier foods within easy reach means you'll be more likely to eat more of these foods. Place fruit in a large bowl on the counter and serve cut vegetables as the family arrives home from school or work.
- Buy fresh, plain frozen, or canned "no salt added" vegetables, meat, fish or chicken. Rinse canned foods like beans to remove some of the salt (sodium).
- Use herbs, spices, and salt/sodium-free seasoning blends in cooking and at the table instead of salt, canned soups, salad dressings, stock powders/cubes, and remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Choose food products with the Heart Mark as these are lower in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium (salt), added sugar and are higher in fibre (where applicable).

