

Patient Information

Top Tips for Healthy Portion Sizes

- To get an idea of how much your children might need compared to you, try holding your hand against theirs and see how different they are in size. The smaller the hand, the smaller the portion they need.
- Talk to your children and explain that they don't need as much as you or their older brothers and sisters and that one size doesn't always fit all.
- If your children eat portion sizes that are a lot bigger than the average ones listed on the Eatwell Guide handout, find the middle ground by cutting back a bit on the starch and the meat, fish, cheese or eggs and supersize the fruit and vegetables.
- Encourage your children to eat slowly and enjoy their food. It takes 15 or 20 minutes for their brain to realise they've been fed! So take a break for a bit of family chat. By this time it may be easier to persuade them they don't need seconds.
- Keep appetites at bay by encouraging regular balanced meals and healthy snacks in between.
- Hostage release! No need for the children to clear their plates. If they've had enough and you've all finished, they're free to go!
- Handy measures! Hands can tell us a lot about how much we should eat at a meal:
 - Make meat or oily fish portions about the depth and size of the palm of your child's hand. If it's white fish you're serving then their whole hand is about right.
 - Cooked potato, pasta or rice should be equivalent to about 2 of their fists.
 - Supersize the vegetables or salad. A portion is about a handful, but you can serve as many handfuls as you can get them to eat!
- If it's going to be a while before you can get the tea on the table offer the children a healthy snack when they get in from school. If the children are starving when they sit down to their meal they're more likely to eat too fast and too much.
- Pre-packed foods come in adult sized portions. Try serving a bit less for the children and add some extra vegetables or salad.
- Don't worry about leaving left-overs. Instead, use them up the next day in lunch boxes, freeze them or microwave them up in the evening for a homemade ready meal.
- Plates and bowls can be HUGE! Consider buying some smaller ones to help you serve up the right amount.

- Take-aways and restaurants serve much bigger portions these days than they used to, so beat the marketing hype and don't get fooled into thinking this is the right amount to serve at home.
- If you're eating out or having a take-away consider sharing portions rather than having a whole one each. See the 'Top Tips for Eating Out and Takeaways' information sheet.