

## Portion Control Factsheet

### What is Portion Control?

A healthy, balanced diet means not only eating the right types of food and drink, but also eating them in the right amounts. Portion control helps us to understand the amount of food you should eat depending on how much energy your body can use. It is important that we consume the right amount of energy for our body's demands as too much or too little can have negative impacts on our health.

The amount of energy we need to consume, varies from person to person. Factors such as age, gender, height and weight can affect how much food we need! At different ages, children will require different amounts of food to meet their changing energy needs.

Portion control is important for children and young people as it can help to prevent overeating, and teaches children to listen to their hunger cues. It's not about restricting food — it's about balance and awareness.

### 💡 Top Tips for Portion Control

- To help maintain better portion control try to avoid going back for second helpings at meal times
- Refer to your handy portion guide when serving up meals at home and when you're out and about
- When eating out try to go for the small or regular size options rather than opting for the large size
- Try to be mindful of individual portion sizes rather than serving up the same size portions for each member of the family. Also try not to compare your portions to what others eat as they may need to eat more or less than you
- Encourage children to finish their meals when they're full rather than encouraging them to clear their plate
- Try using a smaller plate to help you manage how much you're having at meal times
- Encourage children to eat without distractions such as screens as it allows them to slow down and be more mindful of what they are eating
- Be mindful that the serving sizes on food labels may be more than you need so try to serve up food/snacks to your portion needs rather than the recommended serving
- Serve up meals by filling half the plate with your fruit/vegetable serving on first as these are generally the lowest calorie part of your meal
- If you are having snacks from sharing bags/packets, measure out a portion into a small bowl instead of eating directly from the packet. This can help you to be more mindful of how much you're eating.



## Handy Portion Guide

- One easy way to better understand what a person’s portion sizes should be is to use their hand as a guide.
- Everyone has different sized hands, which serves as a reminder that everyone requires different portions.
- Hands are portable. They come with you everywhere so can always help to guide you in making smart portion choices.
- Hands scale with the individual which means that we are managing our portions over time.
- Using hand-size portions can help you track your portions easily and saves time by avoiding unnecessary weighing and measuring of food, which most people don’t need to do.
- When doing this activity with the child or young person, consider the different sized hands that may be in their household – parents/guardians and siblings. It’s a good reminder for children that it is ok if they are eating less than their older siblings and that parents are not being unfair by offering different amounts but instead are simply meeting the energy needs of each child/person in the household.



**Vegetables**  
2 Hands Cupped Together



**Fruits**  
1 Fist



**Protein**  
Palm of the Hand



**Carbohydrates**  
1 Cupped Handful