

Right-Size Your Portions

Q: What in the world does a hamburger have to do with a yo-yo?

A: When a hamburger is a healthy portion size, it's about the same size as a yo-yo!

Today's oversized portions often lead to overeating. Keep that from happening in your family with these simple tips for recognizing and enjoying healthy serving sizes. Then, share the illustrated guide on the back with your youngster for a fun reminder of what healthy portions look like.

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Recognize a serving

Play the "How big is a serving?" game. Set out measuring cups and spoons, and choose an item from your refrigerator or pantry (say, a tub of cream cheese or a box of crackers). Each person measures or counts out what he thinks is one serving. Together, check the label. Whoever came closest picks another food to play again. Over time, your child will learn to "eyeball" the appropriate amount.



Downsize plates

Did you know that dinner plates are actually 3"-4" larger than they were a generation ago? Try instantly reducing portions by bringing plates back down to size. For instance, serve dinner on salad plates. Or use cups instead of bowls.

Cook—and serve—smart

Cut back on how much food everyone eats before the meal even begins. You might bake macaroni and cheese in individual ramekins, one per person. Or plate food before bringing it to the table. Your youngster will get used to enjoying reasonably sized meals.

Portion out leftovers

Store leftovers in sectioned plates or containers. Your child can place individual servings of entrees and side dishes in separate sections. When she's ready to heat up a meal, her portions will be just right.

Single-size your snacks

Eating from a bag or box makes it hard for your youngster to know how many servings he consumes. Instead, help him count or measure single servings into snack-size bags. *Examples:* 20 mini pretzels, 1 cup popcorn.



Dining out

Restaurants often serve extra-large portions. Try these strategies to help your family trim them to a healthy size.

Go small

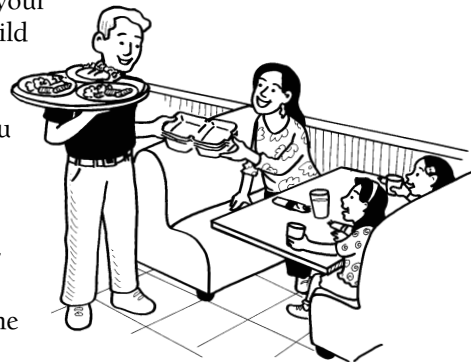
At fast-food or fast-casual places, encourage your youngster to avoid "super-size" items. In a sit-down restaurant, suggest that she order an appetizer or two side dishes for her meal.

Share food

Rather than ordering a full-sized meal for each person, get one meal for every two people. Then, add side salads or extra servings of healthy vegetables.

Bring home a doggie bag

Doggie bags aren't just for dogs! Ask the server to bring a to-go box with your meal. Let your child help you scoop half the food in the box before you even put a fork in it. You'll not only avoid overeating, you'll have dinner tonight and lunch tomorrow—for the price of one meal.



continued



Here's a fun way to serve up healthy portion sizes: Have your youngster use familiar items to visualize how big her servings should be. Post this chart as a handy reference for comparisons between some favorite foods and everyday objects.

Fruits

1 cup grapes: a baseball



1 cup strawberries: a doorknob



1 cup diced watermelon: a lightbulb



Vegetables

1 cup raw, leafy greens like lettuce or spinach: rolled-up ankle socks



1 cup baby carrots: a tennis ball



1 cup peas: a child's closed fist



Grains

1 cup dry cereal: a medium pinecone



1 bagel or hamburger bun: a hockey puck



$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked pasta or rice: 2 ice-cream scoops



Protein

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked beans: a computer mouse



3-oz. serving of meat, chicken, or turkey: a yo-yo



2 tbsp. peanut butter or other nut butter: a golf ball



Dairy

1 oz. cheese: 4 dice



1 tsp. butter: a Scrabble tile



1 cup yogurt: a cupcake wrapper



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Active Kids = Healthier Kids

When your youngster gets plenty of physical activity, she not only will be healthier, she'll also be more likely to stay focused and behave well in school. Encourage your child to get at least an hour of exercise a day with these fun games and activities.

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Zigzag hopscotch

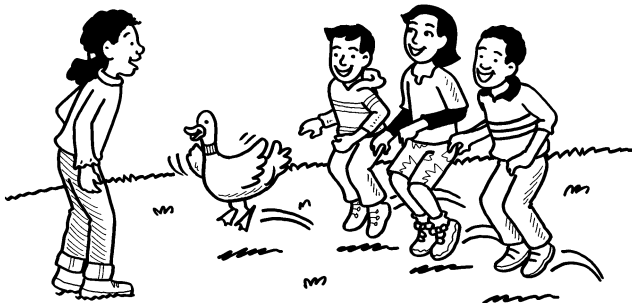
Have your youngster use sidewalk chalk to draw a staircase-shaped hopscotch board on a sidewalk, driveway, or blacktop. To play, she should hop on one foot from start to finish, landing on one square at a time. If she makes it without putting her other foot down, she writes her initials in any square. On your turn, you must hop over the square she initialed. If you get to the end, you initial any empty square. Keep taking turns, hopping only on empty squares or ones with your own initials, until every square is claimed or no one can hop across. The player with the most initials wins.

Kick and block

Form a garden hose into a large circle, and place a soccer ball in the center. Two players stand in the circle. One person is the "kicker," and the other is the "blocker." The kicker attempts to kick the ball out of the circle—kicking in the direction of the blocker. The blocker uses his feet to try to keep the ball in. When the ball goes out of the circle, swap roles, and play again.

Fish or fowl

You can play this game on sidewalks or grass. One player is the caller. If the caller names a fish (bass, perch, tuna), the other players jump backward. If she names a bird (robin, woodpecker, seagull), players jump forward. The caller keeps naming fish or fowl, trying to trick the jumpers. If you jump in the wrong direction, you're out. The last person in the game becomes the new caller. Play until everyone has had a turn being the caller.



Slow-motion race

When you take a walk, try this race where the slowpoke wins. Challenge your family to walk in s-l-o-w m-o-t-i-o-n from one end of a block to the other. Your children will build balance and muscle control as they try to make each step last as long as possible. There's only one rule to follow: Everyone must keep moving—no stopping allowed. The last person to reach the end wins.



Penny hunt

Ask your youngster to count out 15 pennies. Then, have her cover her eyes while you hide them around the house. Set a timer for two minutes, and let her race to find the pennies before the buzzer rings. Next game, she can hide the pennies, and you hunt. Help each other find the pennies by saying "You're hot" when someone gets close to a hiding place and "You're cold" if she's moving away from one. *Idea:* Move the game outdoors, and hide pennies in bushes, under rocks, or in sidewalk cracks.



Beanbag tag

The object of this game is to tag the other person's feet with a beanbag. Choose an open space with a wood or tile floor, such as a hall or basement. Have your child stand at one end of the room while you stand at the other. Now, take turns sliding the beanbag across the floor at the other person's feet. Try to dodge the beanbag by jumping over it. Score a point each time you tag your opponent with the beanbag. The first one to score 10 points wins. *Variation:* To make the game more challenging, slide the beanbags toward each other's feet at the same time.

This way or that

There are lots of ways to cross a playground. Let your youngster start this game by saying, "Come across the playground like this..." and then crossing in a funny way (spinning like a top, walking on her heels). All the other players must cross in the same way. Then, the next leader says, "No, no, no. Come across like this..." and leads players across the playground a different way, perhaps walking sideways. How many ways can everyone think of?



Fitness island

Turn a sidewalk or driveway into an island. With sidewalk chalk, your child can draw a landscape full of fitness challenges. He might create a stream, a bridge, and stepping-stones, for instance. Then, he can pretend to wade through the stream, walk heel-to-toe on the narrow bridge, and jump from stepping-stone to stepping-stone across a make-believe swamp. When he finishes, it's your turn to take the island challenge.

Rainbow walk

Walk laps up and down a shopping strip or around a mall until you've spotted one item for every color of the rainbow. For example, you may find red shoes, an orange safety cone, a yellow sundress, green shampoo, blue jeans, indigo earrings, and a violet rug. Or take a rainbow walk in the neighborhood, and see who can find a red flag on a mailbox, an orange flower, and so on.

Five-minute ideas

Here are everyday ideas for short bursts of activity.

Inside

- Put on music, and lip-sync while doing your best dance moves.
- Play with a pet.
- Do a "routine" like five forward rolls, five push-ups, and five backward rolls.
- Stand in a line, and have each person put his hands on the shoulders of the person in front of him. See how fast you can snake your way through the house without breaking the chain.



Outside

- Practice basketball free throws.
- Play a game of catch.
- Take turns throwing a Frisbee and measuring the distance you tossed it.
- Pick a starting point and a finish line. Have a race.

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