Food portions are larger than ever these days—usually much more than we need. Choose your starting portion size by relating food to everyday items.

A serving of meat, fish, or poultry is equal to a deck of cards.

A serving of fruit or vegetables is about the size of a tennis ball.

A serving of nut butter or salad dressing is about the size of a ping-pong ball.

For toddlers, the right portion size is the size of the palm of their hand.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY PORTION?
Use these tips to help keep your portions right-sized.

• Start with one portion of each food on your plate. If you are still hungry, you can always get more.

• Use the MyPlate model to create a balanced plate. Fill half of your plate with veggies (and/or fruit), ¼ with protein, and ¼ with starch, preferably a whole grain.

• Check the serving size on packaged foods for guidance on portion size.

• Eat your food while sitting down and using a plate or bowl. Avoid eating directly out of packages.

• Eat regularly throughout the day; this helps keep you from getting too hungry.

• Serve food on smaller plates.

• Serve meals from the stove. This can help you avoid eating more when you are no longer hungry.

• At restaurants, ask for a lunch-size portion, split your meal, or box up half to take home.

• Skip the “clean plate” club. Instead, start with smaller portions, savor your food, and eat until you are satisfied.

• Role model the behaviors that you want your children to develop.