Taking the Distortion out of Portions

Do you find yourself lacking energy to get through the day? Do you ever have those midnight cravings or find yourself reaching into the cookie jar?

Eating proper portions of food throughout the day can help give you the energy you need, and keep you from reaching into that cookie jar. When we skip meals or go long periods of time before eating, we tend to over eat and overindulge to satisfy our hunger. Eating consistently throughout the day using proper portion sizes can help avoid that pattern of eating. Our perception of portion sizes has been skewed over time by restaurants constantly increasing the size of their meals.

Balancing your plate is half the battle. If you only have food from one food group, say a carbohydrate snack (whole wheat crackers), that may not get you through the day on its own. Try pairing that food with another food group like low-fat dairy (cheese), to make it more balanced and keep you fuller for longer.

Here are some examples of proper portion sizes of the different food groups:

**Grains:**
When choosing grains, always look for whole grain, as they have more B vitamins, minerals and fiber than refined grains. Grains include pasta, rice, bread, as well as starchy vegetables like corn and potatoes.

**Fruits/Veg:**
When choosing fruit, limit fruit juices to 6oz. and 100% juice, as they often have added sugars; whole fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water. When it comes to vegetables; 1 cup of raw veggies is a serving, and ½ cup of cooked veggies is a serving. Think of how much spinach cooks down!
Low fat Dairy: The type of fat in dairy products is saturated, and not very good for our heart health. It also increases the amount of calories we are consuming. So, aim for low fat or skim milk. Dairy is a good source of calcium, phosphorus and vitamin D, which are great for bone health.

Lean protein: Aim to have skinless chicken (the fat is in the skin!), limit red meat (beef), when shopping for ground meat, aim to get at least 92% lean. Lean proteins will also help you keep satisfied, through the releasing of satiety hormones, and is great to pair with carbohydrates. The serving size for this is much smaller than most people think; but don’t worry about getting enough protein! Most Americans get much more than they need. Some plant based proteins include beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, and tofu.

Healthy fats:
Healthy fats help to delay the emptying of the stomach, helping you to stay fuller, longer. Pair healthy fats with other food groups to create a satisfying snack! Healthy fats are high in Omega-3s which are very beneficial for brain health.
Ways to be successful at using portion sizes:
- Using small plates so your plate looks full and you aren’t tempted to fill up a large plate
- Eating meals/snacks that contain healthy fats and lean proteins can help you feel fuller faster, and keep you fuller for longer.

References:
Reference picture- https://thehow.loseit.com/true-serving-sizes/ adapted from webMD portion sizes
Portion sizes- https://www.choosemyplate.gov/tools-portion-distortion
Information regarding each food group- https://www.choosemyplate.gov/
Veggie picture https://lauriewybenganutrition.wordpress.com/tag/grains/ by Laurie Wybenga, RD
Pasta picture reference- https://diabetesmealplans.com/5085/best-pasta-for-diabetics/

BOARD:
Proper portion sizes and eating consistently can help curb cravings and fight off that mid-afternoon slump. Check out our nutrition blog for more information! http://recreation.gsu.edu/fitness/fitness-center/nutrition-consultations/pawsitive-nutrition/