

rev*it*up

Lesson 7

Take Control of Your Portions!



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**



RUTGERS®

Lesson 7: Take Control of Your Portions!

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Core Curriculum Area: Dietary Quality, Physical Activity

Objectives

Teens taking this class will:

1. Compare how portion sizes have increased over the past 40 years.
2. State ways to reduce their portion sizes.
3. Engage in a high intensity walk by varying their movements.

Behavioral Focus

This lesson prompts teens to:

1. Find ways they can reduce oversized portions and make their eating events healthier.
2. Do an exercise video they can repeat at home.

Background

What's the big deal about portion sizes?

It is no secret that our foods' portion sizes have increased over the past few decades.¹ Many of us think of this as a good thing. After all, we are getting better value for our money. But people often eat most or all of what they are given, so they end up eating more food than they need.^{2,3} In fact, children as young as 3 years have been found to eat more when given a larger portion of food.⁵ As portion sizes have gotten bigger more people have become overweight or obese.^{1,4} Researchers think that larger portions are 1 of the many factors that have caused excess weight gain in the U.S.⁴

Why teach teens about portion size control?

Like all other age groups, teens may eat more than they should due to larger portion sizes. This may be even more true of teens because many of them are going through growth spurts, so they are often hungry. Teens also eat many restaurant foods,⁶ which tend to have bigger portion sizes.¹ These foods are also higher in calories, saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars than food they may eat at home. This means teens have a higher risk of eating too much of these problem nutrients.⁶

This lesson aims to teach teens to pay heed to both their portion sizes and what they are eating to fill up. We know teens need to eat more of certain foods, like

fruits and vegetables.⁷ Research has shown that younger school children who received large portions of fruits and vegetables with their school lunch ate more of these foods.⁸ We think this logic may work with teens too. So, we teach teens to make some portions bigger (like fruits and vegetables) and others smaller (like fried and sugary foods).

How do we teach this lesson?

First, we teach teens how to use the Nutrition Facts Label to figure out the portion sizes of foods they eat. We use the example of a "Party Size" bag of chips to show how easy it is to eat more calories in 1 sitting than the average person needs in 1 day!

Next, we teach teens how portion sizes have changed over the years, using a game adapted from the National Institutes of Health.⁹ This gets teens thinking about how portions have increased since their parents or grandparents were teens and how much excess food they may be eating.

Lastly, we have the teens work in teams to create healthier versions of familiar meals with very large portions. The teens are told they are helping with a new app called "PlateTune," which is meant to mimic the photo editing app [Facetune™](#). Of course, PlateTune is not real. But the tips and tricks that teens come up with are practical ways they can choose to eat better the next time they are faced with portions of less healthy foods that are too big.

Works Cited

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Materials Needed

Activity 1: Veg Out!

- ☐ Take Control of Your Portions! Presentation
- ☐ Take Control of Your Portions! Posters (1 per team)
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Blank paper (1 sheet per team)
- ☐ Pens (1 per team)
- ☐ Timer or stopwatch (you may use your phone)

Activity 2: Walk Indoors!

- ☐ Computer, projector, and speakers (or) SMART Board® (or) TV and DVD player
- ☐ “Walk Indoors! with Leslie Sansone” Video 6: “Add Intensity” available at efnep.rutgers.edu/efnepContent.php?l=eg&c=Exercisevideos.

Prepare to Teach

1. Download the Take Control of Your Portions! Presentation on a flash drive.
2. Download and print the Take Control of Your Portions! Posters. These are 24 by 36 inches by default. You may want to print in-house or take them to a print shop. Laminate them for future use.

Practice until the activity lengths are:

- **Introduction:** 2 minutes
- **Portion Distortion:** 15 minutes
- **Walk Indoors!:** 15 minutes
- **Wrap up:** 3 minutes

This will allow for the lesson to be taught in 35 minutes.

Lesson Plan

Set-up

1. This lesson does not need much help from the teacher. However, she/he can help with slides or with hanging up posters if you like.
2. Set up the computer and projector or SMART Board® and load the Take Control of Your Portions! Presentation.
3. Test the “Walk Indoors!” video. Cue it up to 0:47 so it is past the tips.
4. Tape the posters up around the room so the teens can split into groups later.

Introduction (2 minutes)

1. Greet the teens as they walk in.
2. Ask if anyone has tried any veggie snacks or any of the recipes on efnep.rutgers.edu since the last lesson.

Remember to check for success stories from the teens!

Activity 1: Portion Distortion (15 minutes)

1. Start with the PowerPoint® at Slide 1. Tell the teens that today you will be talking about how they may want to take control of their portions!
2. Move to Slide 2. Ask, “How much of this “Party Size” bag they would eat while watching TV or a movie?” Take a few answers. Mention how easy it is to eat the entire bag in 1 sitting.

“I don’t know about you all, but to me this bag is Gemma-sized!” (Use your own name, of course.)

3. Move to Slide 3.
 - Tell them 1 serving is about 12 chips. Ask how many of them stop at 12. They probably eat many more!
 - Each serving of 12 chips is 150 calories, and there are about 15 servings in the whole bag.
4. Move to Slide 4 to show them the answer. Remind them that most people need around 2,000 calories each day, so this bag of chips is more than most people need for the whole day. So, it is not a good idea to eat all the chips in one sitting!
5. Move to Slide 5. Tell them that since their parents and grandparents were young, serving sizes have changed a lot. And as serving sizes have grown, so has the number of people who are overweight.
 - We all want to get the biggest bang for our buck! However, this way of thinking has cost us our health.
 - Say that you are going to play a quick game to see if they can guess how much portion sizes have changed over time.
6. Move to Slide 6. Say, “Here is a bagel from the past. Bagels used to be about 3 inches wide and were only 140 calories. Now, they’re twice as big! How many calories do you think a bagel has today?” Give the teens a moment to shout out a couple of answers.
7. Move to Slide 7 and show them the answer. Even

though the bagels are twice as big, there's over twice as many calories now!

8. Go through Slides 8-18 in the same way. Here are things you can say for each food:
 - **Cheeseburger:** Having a quarter pounder burger adds a lot of excess calories and saturated fat. A smaller burger could be just as filling.
 - **French fries:** These used to be a side dish. Now there are so many that they have as many calories as the sandwich or more! How many do you really need? The fries at the bottom of the bag are never as good as the first few. You might be just as happy with a little less.
 - **Orange juice:** There used to be 4-ounce glasses just for juice. Now the only place you can find those is on eBay!
 - **Turkey sandwich:** Everyone buys subs these days. Yet all that bread leads to a lot more calories. And no, the few slices of tomato and lettuce don't cancel that out. You may find a regular sandwich is still enough!
 - **Spaghetti and meatballs:** We have gone WAY overboard with pasta! Again, the calories add up quick with grain foods. Try swapping some of the pasta for a side salad instead.

If you have time, have the teens imagine what would happen if the portions continued to increase. What might be considered "normal" to eat 40 years from now?

9. Move to Slide 19. Say, "I bet you didn't know this about me, but in my free time I am an app developer!"
 - Tell them you are working on a new app called PlateTune.
 - When the app is done, users will be able to take photos of their food and PlateTune will magically make it yummiier and healthier! Tell the teens that the app is still in beta testing, and you need their help to test it out.
10. Move to Slide 20. Use the example of Lo Mein to show the teens how to "PlateTune" a dish. Let them know that they can PlateTune by **reducing the portion, reducing the number of calories, and doing things to make the plate more like MyPlate.**
11. Split the teens into teams of 4-5 each. Give each team a piece of paper and a pen and assign them to go to a poster you hung up.

12. Move to Slide 21. Tell the teams they have 5 minutes to come up with as many ways to PlateTune their dish as they can. The team with the most answers (that make sense) wins!
 - Have them number their lists to make it easy to total their answers. Urge them to get creative!
 - Say "Ready, set, go!" and start the timer. Walk around and motivate the teens as needed. Let them know when they have 1 minute left. Count down the last 10 seconds.
13. Ask each team how many answers they came up with. Have the team with the most answers read their list first. If there are any answers that are not good, discuss them and do not reward a point for them. Move on to the second team and ask them to present any answers that were not noted by the first team. Repeat until each team has had a chance to talk.
14. After everyone has read their answers, give a round of applause to the winning team.
15. Take a moment to go over any tips the teens mentioned that were extra creative, thoughtful, or practical. Move to Slide 22 and note any other helpful tips that were not given by the teens.

Activity 2: Walk Indoors! (15 minutes)

1. Tell the class that they will be doing more MVPA – Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity!
2. Ask them to spread out and find a place to stand. Cue the site leader to start the video.
3. Like the first lesson, walk around and encourage the teens. Be silly! Get them excited about being active. If some of the teens are still stubborn, ask the site leader for help.
4. After the video is over, clap and tell them they did a great job. If the class period is too short to finish, keep going with the video until the bell rings.
5. Remind the teens that the videos can be found on efnep.rutgers.edu.

Wrap up (3 minutes)

1. Wrap up the lesson by reminding the class that sometimes we don't realize how much we're really eating. Note that people may eat more calories at 1 meal than they need for the whole day. This often happens more when we eat out than when we eat at home.
2. Let them know that at the next class they will be discussing a very important topic: food safety!

After the lesson is over, remind the site leader what her/his role will be for the next lesson. You may want to send an email like this:

I hope the teens have spent some time thinking about their portions and how to PlateTune their plates since the last lesson. The next time I come, I will be doing some food safety activities. I will do a demonstration with some fake germ powder to show how germs spread. With your permission, I would like to put some on various surfaces in the classroom. Don't worry. It doesn't make a mess. I will also need to set up some food models for an activity. See you then!



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