

CSC

Hanford Occupational Health Services

# Inside Out

## Healthy Eating: How to Avoid Portion Size Pitfalls

*Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

When eating at many restaurants, it's hard to miss that portion sizes have gotten larger in the last few years. The trend has also spilled over into the grocery store and vending machines, where a bagel has become a BAGEL and an "individual" bag of chips can easily feed more than one. Research shows that people unintentionally consume more calories when given larger portions. This can result in significant excess calorie intake, especially when eating high-calorie foods. Here are some tips to help you avoid some common portion-size pitfalls.

**Portion control when eating out.** Many restaurants serve more food than one person needs at one meal. Take control of the amount of food that ends up on your plate by splitting an entrée with a friend or ask the wait person for a "to-go" box and wrap up half your meal as soon as it's brought to the table.

**Portion control when eating in.** To minimize the temptation of second and third helpings

when eating at home, serve the food on individual plates, instead of putting the serving dishes on the table. Keeping the excess food out of reach may discourage overeating.

**Portion control in front of the TV.** When eating or snacking in front of the TV, put the amount that you plan to eat into a bowl or container instead of eating straight from the package. It's easy to overeat when your attention is focused on something else.

**Go ahead, spoil your dinner.** We learned as children not to snack before a meal for fear of "spoiling our dinner." Well, it's time to forget that old rule. If you feel hungry between meals, eat a healthy snack, like a piece of fruit or small salad, to avoid overeating during your next meal.

**Be aware of large packages.** For some reason, the larger the package, the more people consume from it without realizing it. To minimize this effect:

- Divide up the contents of one large package into several smaller containers to help avoid over-consumption.
- Don't eat straight from the package. Instead, serve the food in a small bowl or container.

**Out of sight, out of mind.** People tend to consume more when they have easy access to food. Make your home a "portion friendly zone."

- Replace the candy dish with a fruit bowl.
- Store especially tempting foods, like cookies, chips, or ice cream, out of immediate eyesight, like on a high shelf or at the back of the freezer. Move the healthier food to the front at eye level.
- When buying in bulk, store the excess in a place that's not convenient to get to, such as a high cabinet or at the back of the pantry.

The USDA has said goodbye to the Food Guide Pyramid, and has come up with a much simpler plan to follow. [The ChooseMyPlate.gov](#) campaign focuses on portion control and balance. When filling up your bowl or plate, follow these simple principles: make sure half of the plate is reserved for fruits and vegetables, add a whole grain and a lean protein to the other half of the plate and enjoy a side of lowfat dairy. With this simple concept you can enjoy a satisfying, well-balanced meal every time you sit down at the table.



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[Site Health Fairs \(14th\)](#)

[Workfit Leader Training \(15th\)](#)

[Weight Loss Convoy \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Tobacco Cessation \(ongoing\)](#)

#### August

[Site-wide Summer Recreation Challenge \(ends 12th\)](#)

[Workfit Leader Training \(12th\)](#)

[Site Health Fairs \(11th\)](#)

[Weight Loss Convoy \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Tobacco Cessation \(ends 15th\)](#)

[Tobacco Cessation \(New class starts 22nd\)](#)



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# My Weight Loss Journey

By Janet Sleater (Hanford Employee Success Story)

We know that losing weight and getting healthy can be one of the most challenging things a person can do. And lately, it seems that the amount of information, programs, and tips available for losing weight has become so large and sometimes conflicting, that many people just throw up their hands and figure it's just too hard and complicated. But every once in a while, someone comes along who makes losing weight seem so easy and fun. This month, we are featuring a story from one of our Hanford friends who has done just that. Janet Sleater has changed her life in order to lose weight. She's been a role model for many of her friends, co-workers, and her peers and teachers in the Weight Loss Convoy program. Here is Janet's story.

I was motivated to lose weight and get healthier when I read the *InsideOut* December 2010 article about the 2010 Weight Loss Convoy and the group's success. I knew I needed to lose weight and had tried on my own, more than once, but was unsuccessful. I hoped that this program would work for me since it did for 15 other people.

My first step was to join the 2011 Weight Loss Convoy. Less than three months into the program, I understood why my previous attempts at dieting failed. I had no idea how many calories I was consuming let alone how many calories I should have to lose any weight. I didn't even know how many extra calories it takes to gain a pound (3500 by the way). Now I weigh and measure my food until I've learned how to judge the serving size. I read the nutrition labels, the ingredients as well as the nutrition facts. I'm cooking with whole wheat pastas, brown rice, eat whole grain or whole wheat bread, use steel-cut oats instead of instant oatmeal. I eat more fruits and vegetables. I have also increased my exercise level from nothing to walking 4-6 miles every day.

As a result, since January 18, the beginning of the Weight Loss Convoy program, I have lost over 50 pounds. However, I decided to start a

little early, New Year's Day to be exact, so my complete weight loss is actually over 60 pounds.

In this process, I've given up a few old (unhealthy) habits. I no longer visit royalty—Burger King and Dairy Queen, that is—or any of the other fast food places. While the candy bowl is still on my desk, instead of Snickers it holds a picture of myself and my peers in the Weight Loss Convoy after we completed a 5K. I don't have to worry about the vending machines taking my money because I'm not feeding them any. I don't invite Ben & Jerry, Little Debbie, or Hostess, to name a few into my grocery cart. And, I've given up the habit of being a couch potato.

Snack foods are by far the biggest struggle I've had. I really, really, really love snack foods. While I've eliminated most from my lifestyle and have substituted healthier choices for the remaining ones, I still need to work on either eliminating the remaining or continuing to substitute with truly healthy choices.

I have a trick to stay motivated. The photo shows me standing in front of my office door and the number of pounds I've lost. The sign isn't advertising my weight loss; however, when people ask me what the number means, I'm more than willing to tell them. And since my door is usually open, the sign is also a steady visual reminder. I also get a lot of support and encouragement from my family, friends, and co-workers. Another motivator for me is realizing how these people as well as the other members of the Convoy, all of whom I respect, would feel if I gave up.

For anyone who might be ready to start this process, here are my words of advice. First, this process works but you have to be ready to accept responsibility and be open towards learning. Second, this is a dual process. It's about eating healthier (whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes) and about calorie control. I'm losing weight because I'm eating healthy foods and I know how much I'm eating, not just because I'm eating less. Finally, don't get discouraged. If you have a bad day and "fall off the



wagon" so to speak, and I've had those days, you accept it and move on. I have to learn from my mistakes, not repeat them. But I won't let those times stop me from continuing to lose the weight and they definitely will not stop me from eating healthy.

Now that I've lost so much weight, I feel a lot better about myself, emotionally as well as physically, and I'd like to think I'm a more positive person than I used to be. I also celebrate a lot of small successes. Being able to fit into smaller sized clothes is a great feeling and of course I have to celebrate by buying one or two.

Certain health conditions are prevalent in my family; conditions that can be prevented by maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle. So wanting to stay out of the hospital as well as not wanting to buy new clothes in larger sizes will probably be my biggest diet and exercise motivators for the future.

When you have a large amount of weight to lose, it can seem like you're facing a 20 foot high brick wall that stretches out into infinity. It seems insurmountable; you can't walk around it, you can't climb over it. Yet with the right kind of program, one that teaches you how to eat healthy, which then helps you lose the weight and keep from gaining the weight back, you realize that brick wall has no mortar. So with one push, the bricks fall and now you have a pile of rubble to cross rather than a wall that stops you. Losing the weight won't be quick. But it will definitely be worth the effort.



Invite CSC HOHS to be a guest at your next work group meeting.

**July Featured Presentation:**

**“SUMMER HEALTH”**

by **Laura Eddy** (376-9040) or **Paul Rudis** (376-2109)