



Q: What's the difference between a "portion" and a "serving?"

A: A portion is the amount of food a person actually eats, while a serving is a standard USDA unit of measure. In common usage, the two terms are frequently confused. Both ideas are important, however, if you want to keep your weight and your portions under control. To calculate how many standard servings of a particular food should be in your portion, it is easier to count servings that come in units, like pieces of fruit or slices of bread. Estimating the number of servings in foods that don't hold their shape and spread out on a plate is difficult. For foods like pasta, rice, potatoes, cereal, it helps to have something concrete to which you can compare your portion and determine how many servings are in it. The New American Plate brochure from the American Institute for Cancer Research suggests some simple visual comparisons to reduce oversized portions. A standard-size serving of pasta, rice or cooked cereal (one-half cup) looks like half of a baseball. A standard three-ounce serving of meat looks like a deck of cards. An ounce of cheese looks like four dice. If your portion has more servings than your calorie needs require, eat less. Also, remember that an estimation of your portion size is influenced by the size of the container. A one-cup portion of cereal or ice cream looks reasonable in a small dish, but inadequate in a larger bowl. A recent study suggests that even the shape of a glass can influence our ability to judge how much beverage there is. A tall, slender glass looks like it holds more than a short, wide glass. People tend to fill the short glass fuller, drinking 20 percent more. To help reduce your portions, you may want to use tall, slender glasses and smaller bowls and plates.

For more information on weight gain prevention contact your local **Health and Wellness Center (HAWC)** or **Dietitian** or visit the **SYFYW community website** at <http://airforcemedicine.afms.mil/shapeyourfuture>.

Shape Your Future... Your Weigh!™