Portion distortion!

Is the bigger serving size really the best value for your health?

The prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased dramatically over recent years. This coincides with more families consuming meals outside the home and portion sizes in fast food restaurants increasing. Larger portion sizes not only contain more calories but research shows also encourage people to eat more. Our internal hunger signals should guide us to eat just the right amount of food for our needs; unfortunately external influences such as large portion sizes distract many from following these signals.

In the mid 1950s McDonalds offered only one size of French fries, that size is now considered 'small' and is one-third the weight of the largest size available today.

One chocolate chip Cookie Time cookie (92g) has the same calorie value as eating 5 toffee pops or 12 wine biscuits.
Alternatively 6 apples or 3 pottles of yoghurt provide the same amount of calories as well as important nutrients needed for children's growth and development.

Tips on portion size

- Consider using smaller plates for the foods you want to limit and use larger serving bowls for fruits and vegetables.
- Try not to 'super size' when dining out.
- Choose *mini* cookies and muffins if available.
- Save soft drinks for special occasions only, it may be cheaper to buy a larger bottle and share with many, 200 ml per child over 5 years is a good guide.
- Try to linger over meals to allow yourself time to feel full, turn off the TV and other distractions.
- Avoid grazing, put all snacks on a plate so you are aware of how much you are eating.

After school snack ideas for active kids:

- Monkey roll – banana in bread
- Fresh fruit – serve whole or chopped into bite size portions
- Vegie sticks – chilled and served with cottage cheese
- Sandwiches/toasties – peanut butter, vegemite, baked beans, jam or thinly sliced cheese. Spread margarine thinly on one side of bread or try an alternative like hummus or relish.
- Muffins, fruit buns, scones, pikelets, plain crackers/biscuits
- Popcorn – pop using only a little oil or margarine
- Yoghurt, custard in pottles, cubes of cheese
- Fruit smoothie/ milo - made with green top or light blue top milk