Eat Less
The Upside of Downsizing Portions

EDUCATOR’S RESOURCE GUIDE

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**Related Learning Seed Programs**

- *Eat Smart: MyPlate and the 2010 Dietary Guidelines*
- *Personalizing MyPlate: Easy Changes for Eating Habits*
- *Pass (on) the Salt: Shaking the Habit*
- *Get Off the SoFAS! Avoiding Solid Fats and Added Sugars*
Program Overview

Some people may find the recommendations of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines to be daunting: eat less, avoid oversized portions, and balance calories. To address that advice, this program looks at reasons so much of our population has become overweight and then shows key ways to downsize your calorie intake: choose nutrient-dense foods, decrease the amount you eat, and change your behaviors related to screen time, exercise, and sleep.

Chapter 1 - Why We’re Supersizing

• One reason so many people are overweight is that humans have evolved to have a “thrifty gene,” which enables us to convert extra calories from food into body fat.

• Additional reasons for the overweight epidemic: we’re less active than we were in the past, we have greater access to high-calorie food, and we don’t realize how much we eat.

Chapter 2 - Upsize Nutrients to Downsize Calories

• Most people don’t know how many calories they need in a day and consume far too many.

• MyPlate steers us toward eating foods that are nutrient-dense, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. These foods have lots of nutrients and fiber, few calories, and are filling.

• For maximum nutrients, choose foods that are less-processed, or “whole.” Avoid foods that contain solid fats and added sugars, such as many commercially-processed items.

Chapter 3 - Downsize Your Portions

• The portion size of almost every food and beverage has greatly increased since the 1980s.

• Value specials usually add only empty calories to your meal. The cost to your health is usually not worth the extra price you pay.

• To control portions, put a reasonable amount on a plate, and wrap the rest. Use a smaller plate or order a kids meal.

• To eat less, slow down, get rid of distractions, and give yourself time to feel satisfied.

Chapter 4 - Three Simple Actions to Take Control

• Three behavioral changes can help decrease the number of calories you consume: watch less television, be physically active on a regular basis, and get sufficient sleep.

Chapter 5 - Now That You Know (conclusion)
Before and After
Prompts to generate interest, ideas, and inquiry

Before viewing
To spark interest, activate prior knowledge, and set a purpose for viewing

• [Show students a 12 oz. cup and a 16 oz. cup.] In the 1950s, a small soda at a well-known fast-food restaurant was 12 ounces. A large soda was 16 ounces. Today the 16-ounce size is a small and a large is a QUART! (32 ounces). Why do you think portion sizes have changed? Is this an advantage or a disadvantage for diners?

After viewing
To promote critical thinking

• Data collected by the Center for Disease Control showed that fewer than 1 in 10 high school students get the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables every day. What might be the reasons for this? What are some solutions? Think about what students, schools, stores, restaurants, families, and communities might do to help teens eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables (combined) a day.

• Now that you know that a large soda and fries means empty calories for you and high-profit for the restaurant, what is your opinion of “extra value” deals? How will you decide whether to supersize or add the extra value items the next time you eat out?

• Many people find it challenging to change the three behaviors discussed at the end of the video (screen time, physical activity, and sleep time). For each activity, list any reasons or excuses you might have for NOT making a change. Then choose the behavior you COULD most likely change and describe a strategy/plan for making it happen.

After viewing
To extend learning

• Direct students to the Super Tracker in the Interactive Tools section of choosemyplate.gov to find their personal daily calorie requirement. Then tell them to use their favorite fast food restaurant’s online nutrition facts to find the total calorie count of a meal they typically order there. What percentage of their daily calorie requirement is that meal? Instruct students to use the principles discussed in the video to create a meal with fewer calories. Have students explain their process for putting together a healthier meal.

• The video presented only general information on the effects of screen time, exercise, and sleep on calorie consumption and weight gain. Direct students to use online resources to further investigate one of these connections. In presenting their research, tell students to discuss how their findings can be applied to the lives of real people.
While You Watch... use the graphic organizer to record key words and information.

**Why We’re Supersizing**

**Upsize Nutrients to Downsize Calories**

**Downsize Your Portions**

**3 Simple Actions**
Check Your Understanding
Write short answers for the following questions about the video:

1. What did the bottomless soup bowl experiment tell us about people’s eating habits?

2. What fruits and vegetables (in their whole form) are considered nutrient-dense?

3. Why are “whole” foods usually more nutrient-dense than commercially-processed foods?

4. What is the simple math you need to remember about portion sizes?

5. When faced with a large amount of food, what is a helpful strategy for limiting the amount you eat?
Check Your Understanding (continued)

6. How does using a smaller plate cause people to consume fewer calories?

7. Describe how children’s eating habits change after the age of two.

8. Give two reasons people might burn more calories when they cut their television-viewing time in half.

9. What is a sign that a physical activity is of “moderate intensity”?

10. How does sleep deprivation affect your body’s production of hormones?
Check Your Understanding Answer Key

Write short answers for the following questions about the *Eat Smart* video:

1. What did the bottomless soup bowl experiment tell us about people’s eating habits?
   
   *We eat with our eyes. We will eat the amount that we’re given even if we’re full.*

2. What are fruits and vegetables (in their whole form) considered nutrient-dense?
   
   *They have lots of nutrients and relatively few calories. They also contain water and fiber.*

3. Why are “whole” foods usually more nutrient-dense than commercially processed foods?
   
   *Commercial processing often adds sugars and fats and removes the fiber found in many whole foods.*

4. What is the simple math you need to remember about portion sizes?
   
   *A portion that is twice as large as another portion has twice the calories. A portion that is half the size of another portion has half the calories.*

5. When faced with a large amount of food, what is a helpful strategy for limiting the amount you eat?
   
   *Put a reasonable portion on your plate and wrap up the rest.*
Check Your Understanding Answer Key

6. How does using a smaller plate cause a person to consume fewer calories?

   *Less food is on the plate, but it looks full. That tricks a person’s brain into feeling full.*

7. Describe how children’s eating habits change after the age of two.

   *Before the age of two, they lose interest in eating and stop when they are full. After the age of two, they override the feeling of fullness and keep eating.*

8. Give two reason people might burn more calories when they cut their television-viewing time in half.

   *Possible answers:*
   *They snack less.*
   *They don’t see ads for food.*
   *They don’t see suggestions to eat.*
   *They do something active instead of watching TV.*

9. What is a sign that a physical activity is of “moderate intensity”?

   *Your heart rate goes up -- you can talk, but you can’t sing.*

10. How does sleep deprivation affect your body’s production of hormones?

    *It causes you to make more of the hormone that tells you to eat and less of the hormone that says you’re full.*
Quiz - Multiple Choice  *Circle the choice that best answers the question.*

1. Thrifty genes have wired humans to seek out which two food components?
   a) protein and carbohydrates  
   b) vitamins and minerals  
   c) fiber and water  
   d) fat and sugar

6. What is the component of fruits and vegetables that makes you feel full?
   a) fiber  
   b) minerals  
   c) vitamins  
   d) carbohydrates

2. How does your body store extra calories?
   a) as energy  
   b) as fat  
   c) as nutrients  
   d) as sugar

7. Which is a strategy for eating less?
   a) Eat in front of the computer.  
   b) Eat when you’re tired.  
   c) Eat slowly.  
   d) Eat fast.

3. How did the number of meals Americans ate out change between 1970 and 1990?
   a) the number rose slightly  
   b) the number decreased slightly  
   c) the number doubled  
   d) the number tripled

8. Why don’t we usually take a second helping when we eat from a smaller plate?
   a) Our brain thinks we’re full.  
   b) Our stomach senses fullness.  
   c) Our taste buds are satisfied.  
   d) Our body has enough nutrients.

4. Which group on MyPlate would include fish, eggs, tofu, dried beans, and nuts?
   a) dairy  
   b) protein  
   c) grains  
   d) fruits and vegetables

9. What is a common characteristic of people who live past the age of 100?
   a) They eat meat every day.  
   b) They don’t watch television.  
   c) They get 8 hours of sleep.  
   d) They are physically active.

5. Which is an “empty-calorie” food?
   a) raw spinach  
   b) french fries  
   c) grilled chicken  
   d) baked potato

10. How many hours of sleep should you get to prevent overeating?
    a) 10 - 11  
    b) 8 - 9  
    c) 6 - 7  
    d) 4 - 5
Quiz - Answer Key

Correct answers are in bold-face type.

1. Thrifty genes have wired humans to seek out which two food components?
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   a) dairy  
b) protein  
c) grains  
d) fruits and vegetables

9. What is a common characteristic of people who live past the age of 100?
   a) They eat potatoes daily.  
b) They don’t watch television.  
c) They get 8 hours of sleep.  
d) They are physically active.

5. Which is an “empty-calorie” food?
   a) raw spinach  
b) french fries  
c) grilled chicken  
d) baked potato

10. How many hours of sleep should you get to prevent overeating?
    a) 10 - 11  
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<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>calorie</td>
<td>Unit of measure for energy from food that is used by the body or stored as fat.</td>
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<td>commercially-processed food</td>
<td>Food that has been changed from its natural state by a manufacturer and packaged to be sold; processing often involves the addition of sugars, fat, and sodium and the removal of fiber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calorie-dense</td>
<td>Describes a food or beverage that is high in calories while providing relatively few nutrients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empty-calorie</td>
<td>Another word for “calorie-dense.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>fiber</td>
<td>Part of plant foods that passes through our system without being digested; makes us feel full.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nutrient</td>
<td>Components of foods and beverages that help your body function, grow, and repair itself. The main nutrients are protein, carbohydrates, and fat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nutrient-dense</td>
<td>Describes a food or beverage that is high in nutrients and low in calories; the opposite is “empty-calorie” or “calorie-dense.”</td>
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<td>obese</td>
<td>Very overweight, with a body mass index ≥ 30.</td>
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<td>saturated fats</td>
<td>Unhealthy fats known to contribute to heart disease. Found mainly in animal products, such as fatty cuts of meat, butter, and lard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SoFAS</td>
<td>Acronym for “solid fats and added sugars.”</td>
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<td>trans fats</td>
<td>Unhealthy fats made when a vegetable oil undergoes a process called “hydrogenation” to make it solid.</td>
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<td>thrifty gene</td>
<td>Gene that evolved in humans to enable them to store excess calories as body fat during times of plenty, and then to convert that fat into energy during times of famine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>unsaturated fats</td>
<td>Healthy fats from plants, such as olives, nuts, and avocados, often in the form of oils.</td>
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<td>whole food</td>
<td>Food that is unchanged from its natural state.</td>
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Resources for Educators

Educational Standards

**National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences**

Nutrition and Wellness

14.3.1 Apply various dietary guidelines in planning to meet nutrition and wellness needs.
14.2.1 Analyze the effect of nutrients on health, appearance, and peak performance.
14.2.2 Analyze the relationship of nutrition and wellness to individual and family health throughout the life span.
14.1.3 Analyze the governmental, economic, and technological influences on food choices and practices.

**National Health Education Standards**

Standard 7 for Grades 9 -12: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.
7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

Useful Internet Resources

- **USDA’s ChooseMyPlate resource page**
  
  choosemyplate.gov
  
  The official site of the USDA’s guidelines and MyPlate offers information and tips related to portions and serving sizes and weight management. The “Interactive Tools” link includes the SuperTracker, which allows users to record daily intake. MyFoodapedia provides nutritional information on food items, including “mixed” dishes like macaroni and cheese.

- **TeensHealth**
  
  http://kidshealth.org/teen/
  
  Sponsored by the Nemours Foundation for Children’s Health, this site offers relevant information written in a friendly style for young people in high school and college. Go to “Food & Fitness” to find articles on everything from body image and diet pills to “Figuring Out Fat & Calories” and “Beating the Freshman 15.”

- **Center for Disease Control**
  
  cdc.gov/
  
  To learn about interesting research on portion size and eating habits (similar to the soup bowl experiment), type “Do Increased Portion Sizes Affect How Much We Eat?” into the site’s search engine. This easy-to-read report summarizes experiments with adults and children that involve sub sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, popcorn, potato chips, and more and could inspire students to devise their own research projects.
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