

So what the heck are you supposed to eat now?



It's not this...



...or this!

Here, at last, your blueprint for choosing the **right carbs**, the **healthiest fats**, and **real-size portions**—all without going hungry.

» **Plus, we reveal the secret reason why getting nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day isn't mission impossible.**

by Dana Hudepohl

the calorie is back.

Well, technically the calorie never left (it's not as if it's been vacationing in Bora-Bora), but it sure has gotten short shrift lately in our fat-free! low-carb! high-protein! world. The USDA's new dietary guidelines now say that if you want to lose or maintain weight, it's not the proportion of fat, carbohydrates, and protein in your diet that matters most, but the total number of calories you take in. The good news: We're not asking you to count calories, just to be aware of them. Why *not* count? It's practically impossible to do; even a group of nutritionists in one study misjudged how many calories were on a plate by almost half! Instead, get smart about the portions in front of you—and let common sense be your guide. (Read on to learn just how to do that.) ►

you can't go
wrong
 if you always
 order the
small



« Two scoops too many.



« This size is just right. Enjoy!

"Most of my clients think nothing of ordering a medium, since the word implies average," says Lisa Young, Ph.D., a nutritionist at New York University and author of *The Portion Teller*. "But today's medium frozen yogurt is really a large in disguise." Unless you've been living under a rock, you know that food portions everywhere have ballooned in the past 30 years. "To maintain weight, you really have to be a proactive diner and not just eat what you're served," Young says.

The most important step? Stick to smalls. You won't deprive yourself, but you'll keep calories in control. What about when you're dining out and there is no small? Split. "My philosophy is, We can order more if we're still hungry," says one REDBOOK staffer who shares with her husband. "But we've never had to do that." And if you're at a fast-food restaurant, order the kid-size burger and fries—which, by the way, was the adult size back in the sixties.

At home, avoid stocking up on family-size packaged foods. You eat more out of those jumbo bags because you don't notice how much food you're taking. Healthwise, you're better off buying individual-size bags. Can't resist a bargain? Then divide the large package into single-size servings the second you get home.

know the
 difference
 between a
serving
 and a
portion



⤴ 1 cup of rice may=1 portion.



⤴ But 1/4 cup=1 serving.

Just because you resisted seconds doesn't mean you've had only one serving. "A serving is defined as a standard unit of measure, such as a 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables, and is determined by the USDA," says Young. "A portion is simply what's plopped on your plate—usually much more than a serving." For example, it's recommended that the average woman have two 3-ounce servings of chicken a day, each equal to the size of a deck of cards. A typical chicken sandwich at a restaurant usually contains 6-plus ounces. The reason: "Restaurants lure customers with more," Young says. "The trick is to retrain the way your brain sees food. Before you dig into a steak, ask yourself, Do I need all this? If not, ask for a doggy bag."

The good news: It's easier to get your fruits and veggies than you think. Downing the recommended nine servings a day, about 5 cups' worth, may sound like a chore—until you realize that an entrée-size salad at a restaurant covers half those servings. A cup of vegetable soup, three servings. A cup of grapes, one serving. An apple, another serving. Half a cup of O.J., one more. It adds up fast—try it!

eat fat—
good fat—
 every day



⤴ Heart clogger



⤴ Heart helper

Until this year, the government guidelines on fat—limited to "eat fats sparingly"—were unhelpful. Now the guidelines say that fats and oils are part of a healthy diet as long as you eat the right kind. Good fats—monounsaturated and polyunsaturated—are found in fish and plant-based foods (think nuts, avocados, and olive oil) and protect your heart by keeping your arteries clear of blockage. Bad fats are the saturated kind found in meat and dairy that clog your arteries and raise cholesterol levels. The worst offenders: trans fats. These man-made fats, which are found in margarine, fried food, potato chips, and other packaged goods, clog arteries much faster than saturated fat. Starting in 2006, food makers must list the amount of trans fats on the "nutrition facts" labels of foods. Until then, you can spot them by looking for "partially hydrogenated" oils in the ingredient list. 148 ▶

fruits & vegetables should make up half of your plate



⤴ Eat less.



⤵ Eat more.

You've seen enough sectioned Styrofoam plates in your lifetime to know how they work. The big compartment is for meat, and the two smaller areas are for potatoes and vegetables. Well, sorry, short ribs, but you've just lost your spot. Fruits and vegetables have earned the biggest space on the plate. Not only will rethinking where you put your glazed carrots and Brussels sprouts on your plate help you get your nine servings of produce a day, but research also consistently shows that eating fruits and vegetables can protect against cancer, heart disease, and diabetes (claims that fried chicken has yet to make). What's more, no one has ever gotten fat eating too many cups of sliced tomatoes. "It's the one food group you can eat almost however much you want of and not gain weight," says Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., president of the Produce for Better Health Foundation. In fact, when people eat more fruits and veggies, they eat fewer calories overall, research from Penn State University has repeatedly found. "Produce tends to be high in fiber and water, which fill you up for fewer calories," says Barbara Rolls, Ph.D., professor of nutrition at Penn State University and author of *The Volumetrics Eating Plan*. Mentally, you also feel like you're getting more. For instance, for the same 100 calories, you can get a huge salad with veggies—or a small handful of french fries.

eat the right amount of (the best) carbs

For a typical woman, the USDA recommends six servings of carbs a day (three of which should be the whole-grain kind). But most of us down way more. To help you eat healthier, Lisa Young, Ph.D., author of *The Portion Teller*, describes exactly what one serving should look like for five different carbs.

bran flakes (whole grain!)

One serving looks like: a baseball

Just because today's cereal bowls keep getting deeper and deeper doesn't mean you should fill yours to the rim.

whole-wheat bread (whole grain!)

One serving looks like: a CD case

A sandwich with two slices isn't one serving but two.

brown rice (whole grain!)

One serving (cooked) looks like: a large handful

This amount goes for less-nutritious white rice, too.

pasta

One serving (cooked) looks like: a large handful

A healthy amount should fit on a salad plate.

tortilla chips

One serving looks like: a small handful

Take just one grab and you can indulge guilt-free.

you don't need as many grains as you think



« This is almost a day's worth of grains!



« Much better—this is just two servings.

The minerals and nutrients in grains fuel your brain and muscles, but before you chow down, here are two things to

keep in mind. First, a serving of grains—equal to 1 ounce—is teeny. Half of a mini-bagel equals one serving, while a regular bagel equals five servings. You need only six servings a day if you're trying to maintain your weight, four if you want to shed a few pounds, says Young.

Second, three of your daily grain servings should be the heart-healthy whole-grain kind (think brown rice, oatmeal, or whole-wheat bread), leaving less room for sugary, refined grains (like doughnuts and white bread). The one good thing that's emerged from our country's obsession with low-carb dieting? It's getting easier to find whole grains. General Mills recently announced that all of its cereals will be made with whole grains, and the Whole Grains Council reports that more foods will carry its seal of approval in 2005. (If you don't see a seal, look on the label: The first ingredient should contain the word "whole," such as whole-wheat flour.) □