

Portion Distortion

Nutrition Lesson(s) Supported:

-Portion Distortion

Supplies Needed:

- Box of raw mostaccioli or macaroni
- Plate or bowl
- Portion Distortion Poster
- Measuring Cup

Length of Time to Complete:

10 minutes

Audience (grades): 4-8

Background:

A portion is how much food you consume in one sitting (a plate of spaghetti). A serving is a specified or standard amount, for example 2 oz. of pasta. In the last 40 years, our portions have grown significantly. A bagel is now 6 inches in diameter (about 350 calories) compared to the 3 inches back in the 1960's (140 calories). The reason over $\frac{1}{2}$ of adults and $\frac{1}{4}$ of children are considered overweight in the United States is because our portions are significantly larger!

Process:

Have a volunteer pour how much pasta they would eat for lunch or dinner on a plate. Using a measuring cup, show them how many servings of pasta they put on the plate. Pour the pasta back in the box, and measure out one serving of pasta and place on the plate. Explain that nutrition labels show information for one serving size, so students need to look at how much food equals one serving. If a student poured out 4 servings of pasta, they would need to multiply nutrition information on the box by 4. So 4 servings of pasta (one portion) would be around 800 calories! Brainstorm how we can cut down on portion sizes?

