



## HOW MUCH TO EAT AT ONCE?



When portion size is ideal, food is more readily digested, assimilated and absorbed. Portion control is also used as a weight loss strategy, preventing overeating. But how much food is ideal and what is normal? The best portions are often those recommended as a serving in the Canada Food Guide. If we should eat 7-10 servings of fruits and vegetables, and you eat three meals a day, that amounts to 3 servings per meal.

Fruits and vegetables are often measured in half cup quantities. For example  $\frac{1}{2}$  a cup of juice or  $\frac{1}{2}$  a banana is one serving. For fruits and high-starch items containing natural sugars, portion control can help regulate blood sugar. With vegetables, particularly water-based vegetables, eating two servings at a time is just right, like a cup of cooked vegetables or salad.

Meat should be consumed in about a 4 oz serving, the size of a deck of cards. Meat alternatives, like nut butters are measured by the tablespoon. Nuts, as they are high fat should be consumed in 1 oz. portions, such as 8 almonds. Eating more than one tablespoon of higher fat items like mayonnaise and butter or margarine at a time is not advised, which is why they are at the top of the food pyramid, labeled as extras. Some oils, like olive oil can be consumed more liberally than refined cooking oils and shortening, which are made for longer shelf life and are denatured from their natural state and difficult to digest and use for energy.

Grains can be consumed in two servings at a time, such as one bagel or a bowl of cereal, cold or hot. Keep in mind that when we eat sugar-containing cereals, or add sugar it makes the quantity less that we should eat to regulate insulin levels. Diabetes is becoming epidemic in our country and the United States. North American lifestyles can benefit from portion awareness so we know what to eat in abundance and what to limit in quantity. Visit the nutritionist today!