

6 JANUARY 2016

2016: Fad diets are OUT and perfect portions are IN

Dietitians are calling on Australians to start the New Year with a bang by making this year's resolution to forget fad diets and instead aim for perfect portions.

A new survey of 1,230 Australians, commissioned by the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA), found about half of all adults aged 18 to 64 (54%) are unhappy with their current weight¹.

DAA will soon launch its annual Australia's Healthy Weight Week (AHWW) campaign (15-21 February) to make it easier for all Aussies to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

According to the peak body for dietitians, eating the right amount, rather than piling up the plate, is a key way to reduce your kilojoule intake and manage your weight.

'We all know fad diets come and go, and usually end in failure. So rather than starting the diet merry-go-round this year, make your New Year's resolution about being more aware of the right portion sizes and how much you're eating,' said DAA Spokesperson and AHWW ambassador Professor Clare Collins.

Professor Collins said getting back into the kitchen for more home-cooked meals and keeping a check on how much you serve yourself and your family is a good place to start.

But according to Professor Collins, there's more to this story.

'Research shows that substituting vegetables, and other low-kilojoule, nutrient-rich foods, for those that are 'energy-dense' is the way to go. This helps to fill you up, without tipping the scales in the wrong direction.

'Aim for 2-3 or more cups of vegetables or salad a day. At the moment, most Aussie get nowhere near that. So a simple step when cooking at home is to start your meal with a salad or add an extra serve of vegetables to your main meal. Let vegetables fill at least half your plate,' said Professor Collins, an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

Professor Collins' research² has found Australians typically overestimate portion sizes, especially for foods like pasta (a good guide is about a cup) and chocolate (should be no bigger than half a small chocolate bar), compared to what health authorities recommend, and this can lead to 'kilo creep' over time.

'When there's more food on the plate or when we use bigger plates and bowls, we eat more. The difference between one and two cups of pasta at dinner is around 870kJ. If you eat a double portion size on a daily basis those extra kilojoules could see you gain around 1-2 kilos a month if you don't burn this off doing extra exercise.

'To eat less without thinking about it, switch to using smaller plates so you don't notice you're serving yourself less food,' said Professor Collins.

The DAA survey found that already 26 per cent of Australians said they would review their portion sizes.

‘The challenge is to get everyone to use simple, pain-free strategies – such as smaller plates, greater proportions of vegetables and cooking more at home – to help manage weight,’ said Professor Collins.

Award-winning celebrity cook, Callum Hann, and Accredited Practising Dietitian, Themis Chryssidis (both from Sprout), are supporting this year’s Australia’s Healthy Weight Week, teaching Australians about home cooking and choosing the right portions sizes.

Hundreds of health-focused events, including nutrition workshops and cooking classes, are being held around the country to mark the week. Find out what’s on near you, and get nutrition tips and recipes, at <http://www.healthyweightweek.com.au>

ENDS

For further information or to organise an interview with Professor Clare Collins, contact Maree Hall, Dietitians Association of Australia, on 0408 482 581.

Background information:

About Australia’s Healthy Weight Week (15 to 21 February 2016):

AHWW, an initiative of the Dietitians Association of Australia, is an ideal time to kick-start healthy eating habits.

The aim for the 2016 campaign is straight-forward: to encourage more Australians to cook at home as a way to help achieve and maintain a healthy weight. AHWW also encourages Australians to seek expert and individual nutrition advice from an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD). APDs are nutrition scientists with years of university study behind them. They work with people to develop tailored eating plans and support and motivate them to make diet changes for life.

Award-winning celebrity cook, Callum Hann, and Accredited Practising Dietitian, Themis Chryssidis (both from Sprout), are supporting AHWW in 2016 – including through a launch event in Adelaide on Monday 15 February.

For more information, including the AHWW Instagram Cooking Challenge and the new AHWW cookbook *Everyday Healthy II* plus nutrition tips, recipes, event details and a social media toolkit, see the AHWW website at www.healthyweightweek.com.au and follow AHWW at www.twitter.com/DAA_feed and use #AHWW. You can also take part in the [AHWW live Twitter chat](#).

Fast facts

- The latest National Health Survey (2014-2015) found 63.4% of adults are overweight or obese, this equates to 11.2 million Australians. Looking a little deeper the survey found seven out of 10 men (70.8%) and just over half of women (56.3%) are overweight or obese³.
- The same survey found only 7% of Australian adults meet the recommended daily serves of vegetables, and just 49.8% meet the Australian Dietary Guideline's recommendation for fruit.
- According to Australia's latest National Nutrition Survey (2011-2012), more than 2.3 million Australians (13%) aged 15 years and over reported that they were on a diet to lose weight or for some other health reason. This included 15% of females and 11% of males⁴.

Note: Australia's Healthy Weight Week 2016 is proudly supported by Meat & Livestock Australia, Australian Mushroom Growers, CanPrint and Thomas Farms Kitchen.

Practical tips for portion control from Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs):

- At a buffet, take a walk around and decide what you want first. Then serve yourself the fruit, salad and vegetable items before the other dishes. **Clare Collins FDAA and APD.**
- Listen to your stomach and stop eating when it signals you're full. This may mean leaving food on your plate which is hard for many to do. **Catherine Saxelby APD.**
- Use your hand as a good measure of portion. A balled up fist is roughly a serving of carbohydrate food (pasta, rice, potato, sweet potato), the palm of the hand is roughly the serving size of protein (meat, chicken or fish), and the bowl of both hands is a serving of veggies. The fist can also be a good measure for a medium size piece of fruit. **Kate Gudorf APD.**
- Snack in 100 calorie portions. One large fruit (eg. banana = two small fruit (eg. kiwi fruit) = one slice of wholegrain bread = 100g yoghurt = 14 almonds/cashews. Read food labels for more ideas. **Amanda Clark AdvAPD.**
- Include a variety of vegetables and salad into your weekly shopping budget and always plan to include at least half a plate of colourful vegetables or salad with every meal. **Katherine Baqleh APD.**
- For nuts, pre-portion them into small containers to make a handy snack. The small décor storage dressing containers, available at the supermarket, hold 25-30 grams. **Clare Collins FDAA and APD.**
- Swap large plates or deep bowls for plates that are 22-25cm in diameter. **Sara Grafenauer APD.**
- Try eating more regular meals/snacks over the day to help regulate your appetite. This may help avoid overeating at your next meal. **Julie Martin APD.**
- Lean meat portions the size of your palm are perfect. Cut yours down to size and save the leftovers for lunch tomorrow. **Sally Marchini APD.**
- Eat slowly and pay attention to the food in front of you. Don't eat mindlessly as you'll exceed your natural point of fullness. **Catherine Saxelby APD.**
- Leave a cup measure in your cereal box to scoop out the right portion each morning. **Jacqui Heward APD.**
- Try using a smaller dinner plate when you dish up your meals. **Julie Martin APD.**
- If you're eating out, avoid ordering larger serves of meats and pastas when hungry, instead order extra side vegetables. **Themis Chryssidis APD.**
- Focus on food quality, not quantity, and take the time to savour and enjoy the smell, taste and texture of every mouthful. **Katherine Baqleh APD.**

- Aim to include half a cup of legumes at least twice per week, and include 150g of fish 2-3 times per week. **Chloe McLeod APD.**
- If you want a rich dessert, split it among two or three people - food is always more enjoyable when shared! **Rachel Gerathy APD.**
- Plate out the portion you think you should eat, especially for nuts and snack foods. Don't go back for seconds – train yourself to be content with what's on that plate. **Catherine Saxelby APD.**
- When eating out, aim to order a dish where half of your meal is taken up with vegetables or salad. **Jenna Obeid APD.**
- We eat with our eyes, so choose a smaller plate to serve your food on, and suddenly your meal will look bigger! **Jemma O'Hanlon APD.**
- When thinking about fresh fruit, the size of a tennis ball is about one serve. **Rachel Jeffery APD.**
- Dessert can be an enjoyable part of eating out, but next time try sharing one dessert between two. **Emily Burgess APD.**
- If you're drinking alcohol, have water spacers between alcoholic drinks to prevent over-indulging. **Rachel Jeffery APD.**
- Meat alternatives such as tofu, eggs or lentils are great cost-effective foods that provide a good portion of protein. **Jenna Obeid APD.**

Extra tips, when it comes to your main meal:

- Use your fist size to guide portion sizes for you, two fists of vegetables or salad, one fist of carbohydrate and one fist of protein on your plate or in your lunch box. **Simone Austin APD.**
- The size of a deck of playing cards is a good way to visualise one portion of cooked lean meat or chicken, and one serve of vegetables equals 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables or 1 cup of salad vegetables. **Corrine Tighe APD.**
- Aim to fill half your plate with veggies or salad, this will help to minimise the portions on the other side of the plate! **Lisa Renn APD.**

¹ Ombipoll survey (October 2015) of 1,230 Australians adults aged 18-64 years, commissioned by the Dietitians Association of Australia.

² Collins CE et al. How big is a food portion? A pilot study in Australian Families. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* (2015): 26, 83–88.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2015). *National Health Survey: First Results, 2014-15*. Retrieved on December 16 2015 from

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.001~2014-15~Main%20Features~Overweight%20and%20obesity~22>

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2014). *Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results – Foods and Nutrients, 2011-2012*. Retrieved from

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.007~2011-12~Main%20Features~Key%20Findings~1>