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Health



Nutritionist Promotes Weight Loss Through "Portion Telling"

DIAL UP BROAD BAND

August 02, 2005

A New York City nutritionist is trying to change the way we all think about eating. NY1 health reporter Kafi Drexel filed the following report.

Most New Yorkers have their own methods for figuring out the proper portions of food to eat.

"(I stop when) my plate is empty," Matt Williamson says. "If the sandwich is big and hot, and it tastes great, sometimes it's difficult to stop."

"I tend to eat until I'm satisfied," adds Deirdra Bayley. "And I try not to eat until I'm like stuffed or feeling bad, and that usually works for me."

Sounds reasonable enough, but New York-based nutrition consultant Dr. Lisa Young says most people don't realize how much they are actually eating. When they go out to a restaurant, she says, they are actually eating 30 to 50 percent more than they think.

Dr. Young has already doled out advice in the hit documentary "Super Size Me" and now she's doing it again with her book "The Portion Teller."

"Portion sizes are enormous today," she says. "I mean they are 2 to 5 times larger than they were in the 1970s. We're talking bagels, muffins, cookies –

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everything's become super-sized and it's no coincidence that we, too, are becoming super-sized. And the key to solving this problem is not so much worrying about what we eat, but focusing on amounts – how much we eat.”

Dr. Young says most people have no clue about how much they should be eating. Her book uses visual aids, called "smart-sizing," to determine how much we should be eating for a permanent path to weight loss. Programs like Weight Watchers already use similar methods.

She uses a baseball as an example. She says to the amount of pasta we should be eating, about a cup, is roughly the size of a ball. Compare that, she suggests, to the serving usually serving size at restaurants which is usually about 3 cups.

There are other visual clues, too. You can use a deck of cards to determine how big a serving of meat should be, or a shot-glass to determine how much salad dressing you should be using.

Dr. Young says that calories count, too, for losing weight. So it isn't just about eating small portions. It's more important, she says, to learn what you're being served.

The best tip she can give is to go for smaller portions of high-calorie foods, and to supplement that by filling up on low-calorie fruits and veggies.

One of Dr. Young's patients, Gina Romano, says she's a big believer in the "Portion Teller" plan.

"I think it's helpful because you're not measuring things," she says. "I never stick with that. If you go on something, and you're measuring it exactly, worrying about every little part of it, it's kind of annoying and you stop and you eat the big portions again.

And after following the plan for three months, Romano says she's lost almost an entire pant-size.

–Kafi Drexel

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