

Portion Patrol: Pancake

March 7, 2006

Today's favorite food: We've all heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but overdoing it on calories early in the day can also set you up for an overload come sundown. To prevent maxing out your daily allowance before 9 a.m., be sure to watch the portions of your favorite breakfast foods.

A typical pancake made either at home from a mix or in your average breakfast establishment falls into the white-flour category of carbohydrates, which have been stripped of the healthy ingredients present in whole grains, according to [Lisa Young, Ph.D.](#), author of "The Portion Teller." Your best breakfast bet would be to opt for the whole-grain variety of pancake, which contains fiber and nutrients needed in a healthy diet.

According to U.S. government guidelines, most adults should consume 6-to 8-ounce equivalents of grains daily, with at least half of those allotted to whole grains. Like one slice of bread, one pancake is equal to one ounce.

One-serving-sized pancake = 4-inch diameter = the diameter of a compact disc

Calories: 86

Carbohydrates: 10.8 g

Fat: 3.7 g

Protein: 2.4 g

Note: One pancake may be low in calories, but watch what you put on top: One tablespoon of maple syrup contains 52 calories full of refined sugars – a.k.a. no-nutritional-value-sugars. For a healthy topping, add fresh fruit instead.

New government diet regulations make constructing your daily dietary intake as simple as building an actual pyramid. But with help visualizing portion sizes, at least some of the mystery surrounding your favorite foods can be solved. Visit www.MyPyramid.gov for more information.

—CHRISTINA ORLOVSKY

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Portion patrol: Baked potato

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TODAY'S FAVORITE FOOD: Before the low-carb craze, a baked potato was often a dieter's delight, because of its low calorie and fat count. Its ability to be stuffed with just about anything, from light and healthy options, like broccoli or salsa, to not-so-light toppings, like heaps of cheese and sour cream, is both its highlight and its downfall.

While a potato does fall into the vegetable category on the food pyramid, its high carbohydrate count puts it into the starchy vegetable group, which should be consumed in moderation, said Lisa Young, Ph.D., R.D., author of "The Portion Teller." In fact, it is similar to a slice of bread in its calorie and nutrient count.

According to U.S. government guidelines, one potato amounts to 1 cup of starchy vegetables. Women should consume no more than 3 cups of starchy vegetables per week; men, no more than 6 cups.

Still, when it comes to picking the perfect potato, opt for the baked over the French fried. Just be sure to watch your toppings!

ONE-SERVING-SIZED POTATO = 1 medium potato = the size of a computer mouse

CALORIES: 138

CARBOHYDRATES: 31.3 g

FAT: 0.2 g

PROTEIN: 3.7 g

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