

Portion Patrol: SOUP

Use a spoon and, of course, some healthy ingredients

Today's favorite food: It's the quintessential comfort food, but soup isn't only good for keeping warm on a cold day. It can also serve as a healthy addition to your daily diet.

"It's a great way to start a meal," says **Lisa Young, Ph.D., R.D., author of "The Portion Teller Plan."**

But the benefits in the soup bowl don't come without conditions. Creamy chowders and thick bisques are not ideal choices.

"Limit cream soups. Stick to vegetable-or bean-based soups," **Young** adds. "They are low in fat, high in fiber and rich in vitamins C and A."

The U.S. government offers ways to incorporate healthy food items into soups, such as adding barley to vegetable broth or mixing barley, wild rice, brown rice, broth and spices to include more whole grains into your diet. A good tip is to use pureed, cooked vegetables to thicken stews or soups.

Soups fall into the government's food pyramid based on their main ingredients: vegetables, beans, proteins or fats. By sticking to vegetable-or bean-based soups, you can satisfy your daily vegetable or meat and beans requirements: two to three cups of vegetables a day and five to 6 1/2-ounce equivalents of meat and beans a day. One cup of bean soup, for example, satisfies two-ounce equivalents in the meat-and-beans category.

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

One serving
black bean soup

(canned, condensed)

8 ounces = a standard
Styrofoam cup or old-fashioned
teacup

Calories: 207

Carbohydrates: 35 g

Fat: 3 g

Protein: 11 g

Sugars: 0.6 g

Source: CalorieKing.com