



An HMR® Program

Our thoughts on Portion Control

In our “Fundamentals of Weight Loss” handout we say about proteins and grains:

“Pasta is fine, but not with butter or cheese. Chicken is good, but not breaded and fried in oil. **Keep an eye on portion size.** A good standard portion size is **1 cup** for grains like pasta, rice, or cereal, **1 “sandwich”** for grains like bread, wraps, or bagels, and **6 ounces (about the size of your hand, or 2 decks of playing cards)** for proteins. Cut these portion sizes in half if you do a grain and a protein together in the same meal (i.e. 3 ounces of shrimp and ½ cup of rice to make a stir fry). **Always eat these foods with 1-3s to help control your portions.** Put 2 cups of peppers, onions, and mushrooms in that shrimp and rice stir fry!”

Here is a more complete statement on portion size for ANY food you want to eat:

The “proper portion” is the amount of food it takes for you to be happy. If you are hungry, you want a bigger portion. If you are depressed, you want a bigger portion. If you like the food’s taste, you want a bigger portion. It doesn’t matter what we tell you is the “correct portion”, or what the nutrition label says. When you want to eat, we can’t stop you. Only you will know when you have had enough to fit your need.

So... if you want more pasta, or more chicken, or more ice cream, you are always ALLOWED to have more. The only case you need to consider is whether you are happy.

If you are gaining weight, you’ll need to decrease your portion size for certain foods

If you are getting headaches or having some other medical concern, you’ll want to decrease your portion size for certain foods.

If you are feeling sluggish, you’ll need to decrease your portion size for certain foods.

All of these conditions factor into that “happiness” as well.

We like these recommendations for portion size:

1 cup of grain

6 oz. of protein

0 of anything in the 7-10s on the Calorie Guide

Start there, and based on your results, adjust the portion sizes so you are happy.



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Keep in mind: if you aren't happy with your portion of chicken, you can add more chicken, but you may not like what the scale does in response. If you gain weight, you need to find a different way of gaining that happiness.

Add more 1-3s. Have shrimp with your chicken. Have more vegetables.

Swap something else for the chicken. Give up the pasta to have more protein.

Remove the high calorie condiments. Cook that chicken without oil/cheese.

Serve it in a high-volume way. Make it into a big bowl of soup. Or a giant salad.

Change the presentation. Dice it, or shred it into smaller pieces, so it lasts longer.

Remove the chicken altogether. If you're not happy with a smaller portion, and you haven't figured out how to control it, swap it out completely. Make the whole dish with a food that's lower on the Calorie Guide (crabmeat, for example).

Any of these suggestions might allow you to use less chicken and still be happy. And in any of these cases, you use less chicken without someone having to FORCE you to do it. This is the only way that you can control you portion sizes long-term. And this will apply to any food you want to eat.