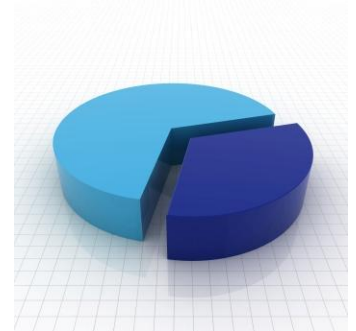


## Prim and Proper Portions part 1

According to Thesaurus.com, synonyms for "prim" include: precise, proper, and fastidious. Antonyms include "uninhibited." That certainly describes the food portions most South Africans eat.

Studies show that our portions have ballooned in the last 2 decades or so. This is especially true when we eat out. No doubt our larger portions have contributed significantly to our excessive kilojoule intake and the resulting obesity epidemic.

The time has come for us to become more prim and proper about our food portions!



Yes, culture and upbringing play a major role in determining how and what we eat as adults. For instance, many of our parents belonged to the 'clean plate club' and so we were conditioned to always eat everything that was on our plates. Especially if we wanted dessert! The food industry also makes it so easy and appealing to eat more by promoting super size meals. Yes, we may get value for money, but at the same time we get value for waistline!

Relying simply on willpower is not enough. Willpower is as easy as holding your breath underwater. At some point you will need to gasp for air to breathe. In a diet sense you will gasp for food and are likely to overeat if you rely on willpower and are extreme in your approach. Instead of relying on willpower, set yourself up for success by making smart choices and eating the right portions as often as possible.

### What about appetite suppressants – can't they help me to eat less?

They appear to be a quick fix! They are not safe for long term use. They are addictive and will cause havoc with your natural body functions and brain chemistry. They do not offer a long term solution. These type of drugs or medication should only ever be used under the guidance of a health professional and must always be taken as part of a balanced eating plan.

### Tips to help you make your portion sizes mini instead of maxi:

**Contemplating seconds?** Wait 15 minutes. Your stomach needs about that long to signal the brain that it's full, so stall before helping yourself to more mashed potatoes or lasagna. If you're truly hungry after the delay, have seconds of the veggies or salad or have a drink!

**Quit the clean plate club.** Most of us eat everything we're served no matter how big the portion. The average dinner plate is too large to effectively control the portions we eat and research has proven that we usually finish what is put in front of us. A better strategy: Eat mindfully and slowly. Listen to your body and try to leave food on the plate when you are finished eating. Simply using a smaller plate will assist you to feel like you are having a 'full plate' of food but actually be eating less! This simple strategy can reduce your meal energy intake by 25%!



**Make "small" your default setting.** When ordering food or drinks or buying packaged food at the shop, automatically go for the smallest size (The exceptions: Salads and veggies without added fat.) Get the small latte, the small biscuit or muffin instead of the mega coffee with the huge chocolate chip mega muffin. Calories or kilojoules you haven't bought can't end up around your waist!

**Pack your leftovers before eating.** Sure, it's easy to put a healthy plate of food in front of you. The trouble comes when the plate empties and you have more food sitting in front of you in alluring serving bowls. The answer: Package and store leftovers before you sit down to eat. That way, getting seconds becomes a whole lot harder and feels more inappropriate.

**Manage your fork.** After every bite of food, put your fork down. Don't pick it up until you have thoroughly chewed and swallowed the previous bite. The goal is both to slow down your eating and to eat less. *Remember:* Your body needs 15-20 minutes of digestion before it sends signals to your brain that you are no longer hungry.

**Keep it simple!** Variety encourages you to taste more things, so try and keep your meals simple, but ensure that your overall diet is diverse.

**Avoid snack amnesia.** This happens when you are so busy watching TV or answering emails that you don't register what you are eating, and consequently, you still feel hungry. Eating mindfully and slowly, chewing each mouthful properly can help you to consume smaller portions, no matter where you are. Research indicates that people generally eat more when listening to fast-paced music in a restaurant, or when watching television. During meals at home or at the office, put a small portion of food on your plate before sitting down to eat, instead of serving family-style. Immediately freeze or refrigerate the extras.

**Eat enough.** Have a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack. The ideal meal plan is to have three balanced meals and two snacks a day. Eat foods that are filling. Eating more vegetables with your meal will help to fill you up and you will stop going for the junk food.