

Energize NOT Supersize

By: Mary Jo Gerhardt
Food Service Director

Everybody needs food for fuel. The foods we eat comprise mainly of three basic components: Carbohydrates, Proteins and Fats. Eating a balanced healthy diet which includes all of these components gives our bodies the building blocks needed to help us grow strong bodies & minds for all types of physical and mental activities. Exercise is also important for healthy bodies.

Eating too much food and not exercising or moving around can lead to obesity or overweight. Today, children are the fastest growing segment of the obese population in America. Childhood obesity increases the risk for poor health now and into adulthood. Such diseases as diabetes, asthma, depression and other obesity-related conditions are on the rise in children.

So what has caused this? People weren't always fat. Up until the twentieth century, people simply worked too hard to be overweight. Over the past 50 years or so, lifestyles have changed. Many people do not physically work as hard or long as they used to. Americans started to believe that bigger was better. Restaurants started serving larger portions and manufacturers increased the portion size of baked goods, soft drinks and many other foods. Even plates and bowls have gotten bigger over the years.

So what should you do? Pay attention to how big your portion sizes are. A single serving size of cooked grains (rice & pasta), cooked dry beans, vegetables and fruits are about the size of your fist. Lean meat, poultry & fish serving size is about the size of the palm of your hand. And an ounce of cheese is the size of an average adult index finger. These are just a few examples. Become a "picky" eater. Pick the foods that are the healthiest, such as whole grains, fresh fruits & vegetables and lean proteins and lo-fat dairy products. It's ok to have foods like potato chips, candy and cookies once in a while for a treat. Just remember that bigger isn't always better.

Next time you go out to eat be aware of what you are eating and how much. Eating a variety of foods in modest proportions will not only make you feel satisfied but will also make you feel ENERGIZED!