Serving up new approaches to Portion Guidance

Introducing latest research and new initiatives to help people understand portions and balance their diets.

INFORMATION FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
For this reason we are developing portion guidance at a product level with clear illustrations, product form and pack design that you will learn about here. Additional education materials and resources will accompany these new initiatives, including tools specifically designed to support healthcare professionals. This will build on our earlier work and is a continuous process. As the largest food company employer of dietitians and nutritionists, we respect and highly value your expert role. We hope you find the information in this brochure useful in educating and counselling your clients to help them achieve healthy, balanced diets.

Nestlé encourages responsible nutrition, moderation and variety in food habits. As part of our continuous improvement we are renovating many of our product sizes and packaging so that they provide clear portion guidance. This is one of the key priority areas as part of our global, company-wide commitment to nutrition, health and wellness.

Our aim is to make appropriate portion choices more intuitive for consumers - to help them when they purchase, prepare, serve and consume our products.

Did you know?
To date Nestlé has provided approx 100,000 portion plates to employees, dietitians, healthcare professionals and consumers – feedback shows they assist dietitians and healthcare professionals with dietary education.

Good Food, Good Life...
As the world’s leading nutrition, health and wellness company we aim to enhance lives by offering tastier and healthier choices at all stages of life and at any time of the day helping consumers care for themselves and their families.
Whether they have limited nutrition literacy or are nutrition experts, people often lack the ability to estimate appropriate food portion sizes, particularly of foods presented in multiple units or to accurately estimate calories from large portion sizes.

We all know that over the years, people’s perception of what constitutes a serving, or a portion of food has been slowly increasing. Understanding consumer’s perceptions around appropriate portion sizes and the health implications of portion distortion has been an area of intense research.

**DEFINING PORTION DISTORTION**

Research suggests that consumers select substantially larger portions than the recommended serve sizes, due to a phenomenon known as portion distortion – perceiving large portion sizes as appropriate amounts to eat at a single eating occasion. This can often be facilitated by visual cues such as larger dinner plates, bowls and glassware over the decades has contributed to larger portions being served and consumed.

There’s no denying that portion sizes have increased over the past decades in packaged foods. However, it’s important to realise that this trend also extends to restaurants and even in the home. Take a look at the size of crockery in your grandmother’s dinner set to see this clearly.

**LARGER PORTIONS = GREATER ENERGY INTAKE**

Studies consistently show that when people are offered larger portion sizes they consume more food and/or energy. A 2009 systematic review of the literature by Steenhus et al., (2009) reported consistent findings across thirteen studies conducted primarily in adults. They found that people’s energy intake increases when offered a larger portion, with at least a 30% increase in the amount of food consumed.

Changing the food environment by reducing plate or packaging sizes or providing visual or physical segmentation cues may help consumers choose and consume smaller portion sizes.

**RESEARCH HAS ALSO SHOWN THAT THE EFFECTS OF PORTION SIZE CAN PERSIST OVER CONSECUTIVE DAYS, WITHOUT COMPENSATION OF REDUCED ENERGY INTAKE AT SUBSEQUENT MEALS.**

In one study consumption of 50% larger portion sizes over eleven consecutive days resulted in a sustained increase in daily energy intake leading to an average cumulative increase of more than 460kcal. In another study participants were provided with two identical free box lunches in which one was double the portion size and calories, each consumed for one month. Energy intake at the lunch meal was significantly higher (by 332 kcal/day) during the large lunch meal period as was total daily energy intake (by 278kcal/day) compared to the small lunch meal period. These findings suggest consecutive daily exposure to larger portion sizes can result in sustained increases in energy intake.

A recent study found that the amounts parents served themselves were significantly associated with the amounts they served to their children and in turn the amounts their children consumed. Thus portions offered to children by their parents, may significantly influence children’s intake and subsequently may potentially influence long-term energy balance.

Studies have shown that portion education and training can improve the ability of adults to accurately estimate portion size, which is considered important to the success of parent-directed interventions regarding portion size education for children.

The influence of edible visual segmentation cues was assessed in American university students who ate potato chips while watching a movie. The students were provided with a tube of chips that were either all identical (control) or had red coloured chips inserted at regular intervals. The students with red chip dividers consumed almost 50% less and more accurately estimated how many chips they had consumed, compared with students eating from tubes with no segmentation cues.

Whether they have limited nutrition literacy or are nutrition experts, people often lack the ability to estimate appropriate food portion sizes, particularly of foods presented in multiple units or to accurately estimate calories from large portion sizes.

A 2013 systematic review of the literature by Small et al., (2013) revealed that children 4 years and older appear to consistently increase energy intake, when larger portions are offered.

**KIDS LOSE INTUITIVE APPETITE CONTROL**

A recent review of studies in children found that larger served food portions lead to increased daily energy intake in many children, with studies also reporting higher cumulative daily energy intakes.

A 2013 systematic review of the literature by Small et al., (2013) revealed that children 4 years and older appear to consistently increase energy intake, when larger portions are offered.

**SHOW ME THE WAY**

Understanding appropriate portion sizes has been identified as an important component of healthy eating. Portion control tools, such as portion plates, that provide clear visual cues on what an appropriate portion size looks like, have been shown to be effective in the context of dietary counselling to support weight loss amongst obese adults.

**EMPOWER PARENTS AS PORTION SIZE ROLE MODELS**

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**PORTION GUIDANCE: What’s recommended?**

Whether they have limited nutrition literacy or are nutrition experts, people often lack the ability to estimate appropriate food portion sizes, particularly of foods presented in multiple units or to accurately estimate calories from large portion sizes.

**STOP PROVIDE VISUAL OR PHYSICAL CUES TO STOP**

Changing the food environment by reducing plate and packaging sizes or providing visual or physical segmentation cues may also help consumers to choose and consume smaller portion sizes.

Examples include dividing a larger-size bag into smaller bags or a change in colour to designate the end of a single portion in multi-serve packs.

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AN INDIVIDUAL DISCRETIONARY FOOD, LIKE A LOLLIPOP, IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF WHERE A MANUFACTURER’S STATED SERVE SIZE MAY SEEM DIFFERENT TO THE GOVERNMENT FOOD GUIDE SERVE SIZE.

Take a single wrapped lollipop which weighs approx. 8g and provides approx. 130kJ. This is an appropriate portion size, but less than a quarter of the 600kJ serve size of a discretionary food from the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

For confectionery and discretionary foods Nestlé believes the responsible approach is to provide a range of small, appropriate serve sizes and kilojoule intakes within the maximum of one serve of discretionary foods (600kJ).

DEFINING PORTIONS VS SERVES
The first step is to have clarity around terminology during dietary education and nutrition research.

A PORTION IS THE AMOUNT OF FOOD A PERSON CHOSES ON ONE EATING OCCASION – WHICH MAY BE MORE OR LESS THAN STATED IN A GOVERNMENT FOOD GUIDE OR MANUFACTURER’S STATED SERVING.

A KIT KAT Four Finger pack (45g), includes four fingers which you may consider as a suitable portion.

A HEALTHY EATING SERVE IS THE AMOUNT OF FOOD RECOMMENDED FOR THE DIFFERENT FOOD GROUPS EXPRESSED IN GRAMS, MILLILITRES OR KILOJOULES IN GOVERNMENT FOOD GUIDES SUCH AS THE AUSTRALIAN DIETARY GUIDELINES.

Two fingers are the recommended on-pack serving size (22.5g), which is less than 600kJ.

A food product, on-pack serve is stated by a food manufacturer on the Nutrition Information Panel on packaged food. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) does not specify serve sizes and relies on manufacturers to reflect a realistic portion of the food that a person might normally consume on one eating occasion. The serving size of two fingers is stated in the Nutrition Information Panel on pack.

The right approach to the right portion?
Serving up dietary education and portion guidance can seem pretty straightforward, when in fact there are multiple considerations to getting it right.

LOOKING AT LOLLIES
AN INDIVIDUAL DISCRETIONARY FOOD, LIKE A LOLLIPOP, IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF WHERE A MANUFACTURER’S STATED SERVE SIZE MAY SEEM DIFFERENT TO THE GOVERNMENT FOOD GUIDE SERVE SIZE.

The road to developing new portion guidance
Nestlé has conducted extensive work and consultation to arrive at the new approach to portion guidance and ongoing product renovation and innovation journey.

This process has included consideration of:

- LATEST SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH on portion guidance and consumer behaviour
- EXISTING PORTION GUIDANCE SYSTEMS and their evaluation in Australia and around the globe
- NESTLÉ NUTRITIONAL PROFILING SYSTEM used to benchmark products against set nutrition criteria and developed to reflect public health recommendations
- GOVERNMENT DIETARY GUIDELINES & FOOD GUIDES such as the Australian Dietary Guidelines
- QUALITATIVE RESEARCH with independent Australian Accredited Practising Dietitians
- CONSUMER GROUP TESTING to assess understanding and impact of the proposed guide
- AUSTRALIAN FOOD & GROCERY COUNCIL Code of Practice for Food Labelling and Promotion

As part of our global commitment to nutrition, health and wellness, Nestlé is taking the initiative to provide consumers with guidance on the appropriate portions. This has resulted in changes to many of our product sizes and packaging and the launch of our new portion guidance initiative, starting with our confectionery products.
Introducing NEW approaches to portion guidance at Nestlé

LEADING THE WAY WITH RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER EDUCATION

INTRODUCING NEW NESTLÉ PORTION DEVICE
A PORTION DEVICE THAT VISUALLY REPRESENTS THE STATED ON-PACK SERVE SIZE WILL BE INTRODUCED.

To start the journey we will be leading with our confectionery providing a strong visual cue to the right portion. The portion device will start appearing on iconic Nestlé confectionery products like SMARTIES from May. Nestlé promotes the Australian Dietary Guidelines72 wherever possible. For confectionery and discretionary foods we believe the responsible approach is to provide a range of smaller serve sizes and kilojoule intakes within the maximum of 600 kilojoules or one serve of discretionary foods as outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines72.

NEW NESTLÉ PORTION DEVICE
AN INTERPRETIVE DEVICE THAT PROVIDES A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE SERVE SIZE STATED WITHIN THE NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL.

It brings to life a strong visual cue to the appropriate portion to be consumed at one eating occasion, such as the actual number of confectionery pieces in a stated serve from a larger pack.

CONSUMER RESEARCH
NESTLÉ HAS CONDUCTED CONSUMER RESEARCH74 TO SUPPORT THE NEW PORTION DEVICE. INITIAL RESULTS SHOW THAT IT IS A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS EMPOWERING AND GUIDING CONSUMERS TO ENJOY AND CONSUME CONFECTIONERY RESPONSIBLY.

Our research in a random sample of consumers (n = 383) found that 3 in 5 agreed the device:

- "Contains information I need to know" +
- "Helps me to be more responsible with my eating"
- "Allows me to manage my food intake better" +
- "Helps make sense of other nutritional information on pack"

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