



# NETA

**Nutrition Education Training  
Academy Newsletter  
For Early Childhood Providers**

**October - December 2002**

**Volume 3, Issue 1**



## **Is Bigger Always Better?**

**By: Flavia Schwartzman**



Over the past few years Americans have been gaining weight at an alarming rate and the number of nutrition-related health problems have also been increasing. It is estimated that 30.5% of Americans are obese and 64.5%, or nearly two-thirds are overweight. Researchers also found that 15% of children aged 6 to 19 are overweight.

**Why are we gaining weight?** Most of us are surrounded with easy to reach fast food places selling high calories foods. Children are constantly being exposed to an increasing number of junk food advertisements. Restaurants and food chains are advertising larger sizes at almost no extra cost than the regular sizes. Super-sizing is an aggressive marketing campaign of the food industry that spends an estimated \$33 billion a year on ads and promotions. While the cost of super-sizing is minimal for the food corporations, the cost of eating larger sizes is detrimental to our health. Huge serving sizes have become the normal size.

**Has serving sizes ballooned?** According to the US Department of Agriculture, an average muffin weighs half a pound, chocolate chip cookies are 7 times greater than the standard size and a serving of pasta is 5 times greater than the regular size. Fast food hamburgers have gotten bigger, from an ounce of meat to six ounces or more. At family style restaurants, the portion sizes have also gotten bigger. <sup>1</sup>

**Is a large size a bargain? Is it better for your health? No!** It is not a bargain. The food industry is producing more food than we can consume and they use powerful marketing strategies for us to consume more. **No!** Large sizes give the illusion of getting more for your buck, but they are also giving you more calories, fats and sugar. Increasing a small popcorn to a medium size only costs you a few more dimes, but it also gives you 500 extra calories.

The portion sizes Americans consume today are more than the average person can eat. The USDA Food Guide Pyramid provides recommendations on portion sizes for males, females and children. It is up to each person to determine how much to eat as long as the amount of food does not exceed the total amount of food we need.

Increasingly, Americans are less active. We are trading physical activity for a more sedentary life. We watch more TV, play video games and spend more time on the computer. To add more movement to your day, use your work break to walk for 10-15 minutes. Always use the stairs and if you have to drive, park further away from the entrance.

- STOP! DO NOT SUPERSIZE.** When eating out you can
- Choose smaller portions and/or share the larger portions with others.
  - Stop eating when you are full, you do not have to clean your plate.
  - Doggie bag your leftovers and have it for lunch the next day.

Below is a sample list comparing the Food Guide Pyramid recommended serving sizes and Current Food Industry Sizes.

Food	Portion Received	Food Guide Pyramid Serving Size	Approximate Pyramid Servings in this portion
Bagel	1 bagel (4 oz)	1/2 bagel (1 oz)	4
French Fries	1 medium order (4 oz, 40 French Fries)	1/2 cup (1 oz, 10 French fries)	4
Baked potato	16 oz	3-4 oz	4
Popcorn	16 cups (movie theatre, medium)	2 cups	8
Hamburger	6-8 oz meat	2-3 oz meat	3-4

1. Lysa R. Young and Marion Nestle. The Contribution of Expanding Portion Sizes to the US Obesity Epidemic. American Journal of Public Health, 92:246-249, 2002.

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## Special Holiday Thoughts



### ***Have a Healthy Holiday Season!***

***By: Bernadette Garcia-Roger***

During the holiday season many people worry about eating too much. When families and friends get together to celebrate friendship and unity, it is usually done while preparing and eating seasonal dishes. Food is plentiful, with many exotic dishes and special holiday treats that tend to take the place of our healthier foods. Most of us relentlessly repeat to ourselves, "I will begin my diet next year" and then indulge ourselves during the holidays as if there is no tomorrow.

While it is important that we be concerned about what and how much we eat in a day throughout the year, the holidays always present us with the challenge of not going overboard. It is our personal responsibility to decide what and how much we eat. To help you enjoy your holiday season and celebrate the holidays responsibly we are offering the following tips:

**First,** be realistic. Do not think about losing weight during the holiday season. Your goal should be to maintain your weight.

**Second,** do not deprive yourself from eating the holiday treats. Eat treats moderately and limit how many times you go back for seconds.

**Third,** eat small healthy meals earlier in the day prior to the parties. This way you won't be starving, but rather enjoying the special treats offered at the party. Remember starvation can lead to overindulgence. It is difficult to restrain yourself at a party when you haven't eaten the entire day.

**Fourth,** skip those foods that are fried, but if you must taste it, do it once and then go for the wonderful tray of cheese, fruit and crackers. Get a small plate and share your holiday spirit with others.

**Fifth,** you do not have to eat everything that is being offered. Pick and choose; vegetables and fruits are your best choices, skinless white poultry meat has less calories than dark. Fruit salad is better than cake. Choose a small piece of chocolate instead of the large piece of pie.

**Sixth,** at lunch or dinner parties keep your portions small. This way, if you have to go back for seconds you will have only eaten your normal sized portion.

**Seventh,** when you are asked to bring a dish, prepare a low-fat version of your favorite dish. There are a growing number of low-fat tasty recipes available. Adding herbs and spices provides an aroma that makes your low-fat dish irresistible.

**Lastly and most importantly,** enjoy the Holiday Season when celebrating with family and friends. Pledge to keep those healthy eating habits that you've been practicing throughout the year.

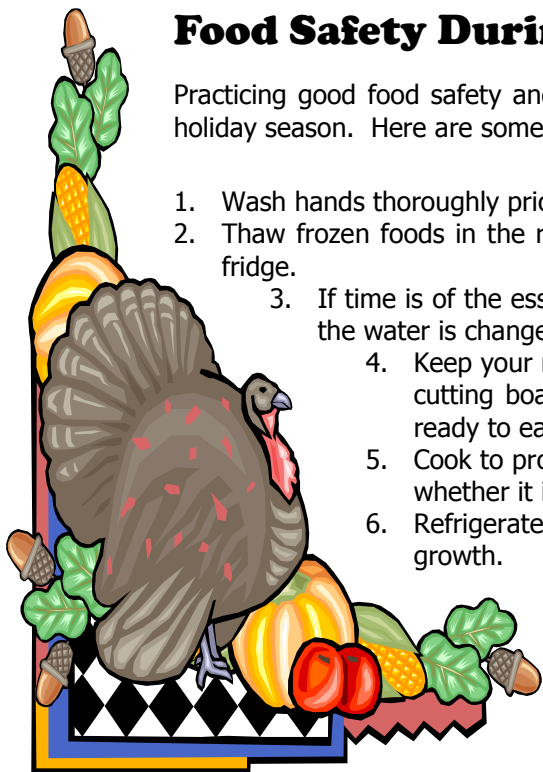


## Food Safety During This Holiday Season

Practicing good food safety and sanitation will keep all of your loved ones free of sickness during the holiday season. Here are some great tips!

1. Wash hands thoroughly prior to meal preparation. Remember to lather up for 20 seconds.
2. Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator in a pan so that juices don't contaminate other foods in the fridge.
3. If time is of the essence thawing in the sink is ok, with cold water. It is recommended that the water is changed every 30 minutes.
4. Keep your ready to eat foods and raw meats separate. If possible use two different cutting boards. Cross-contamination can occur if juices from raw meats mix with ready to eat foods such as fruits and vegetables.
5. Cook to proper temperatures. Using a meat thermometer takes the guessing out of whether it is done.
6. Refrigerate promptly and store them at 40 degrees F or less. This will slow bacteria growth.
7. When enjoying your leftovers, be sure to reheat to 165 degrees F. Use turkey and stuffing within 3-4 days and your gravy within 1-2 days. Most importantly, when in doubt throw it out!

Source: American Dietetic Association; website: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)



## Nutritious Seasonal Recipes



### Stewed Winter Squash with Tomatoes

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 2-1/2 cups tomato purée
- 3-3/4 lbs. butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced
- 30 oil cured black olives, halved and pitted
- 1-1/4 tsp. thyme, or 1-1/4 Tbs. fresh, minced
- 2 cups water

#### Method:

1. Heat oil in a non-reactive saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add garlic and sauté about 30 seconds.
3. Add tomato and bring to a simmer.
4. Add remaining ingredients and salt and pepper to taste.
5. Partially cover pan and **simmer** about 30 minutes or until squash is tender.

Prep: 10 min. Cook: 30 min.  
Makes 10 small servings.



### Sweet Potato Pancakes



#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked sweet potatoes, peeled, and roughly mashed
- 4 eggs
- 1-1/3 cups all purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup milk, plus extra
- 2 cups sour cream

#### Method:

1. Combine sweet potatoes and eggs in a bowl. Mix thoroughly and set aside.
2. Sift flour and baking powder together in another bowl.
3. Stir into sweet potato mixture.
4. Stir in melted butter and milk, adding more milk if necessary to create a thick, lumpy sauce which will coat the back of a wooden spoon.
5. Heat a heavy nonstick skillet or griddle over medium high heat to 375°F. When hot, lightly brush surface with oil.
6. Add about 1/4 cup batter per pancake to skillet and cook 2-3 minutes or until small holes appear in batter and bottom is browned. Turn cakes and cook about 1 minute or until browned. Repeat process until all pancakes are cooked. Serve immediately or keep warm in 200°F oven until ready to serve. Serve with sour cream.

Prep: 15 min, Cook: 5 min.  
Makes servings for 12

## Community Events

1. October 31st: **Happy Halloween!** For Halloween activities check your local library or call city recreation departments.
2. November 29, Noon - 7 pm: Tree Lighting Ceremony, Jack London Square, [www.jacklondonsquare.com](http://www.jacklondonsquare.com), 510-814-6000
3. December 7, 3 - 9 pm: Light Yacht Parade, Jack London Square, [www.jacklondonsquare.com](http://www.jacklondonsquare.com), 510-814-6000
4. December 7, 14, 21, 10 am - 3 pm: Holiday Crafts Fair, Berkeley Farmers' Market, Center Street @MLK, Ecology Center, [www.ecologycenter.org](http://www.ecologycenter.org), 510-548-3333

## Children's Storybooks

1. What's In Your Lunch Box? (3-6 yr olds) By: Quinlan Lee  
Lunchtime never smelled so sweet! This scratch-and-sniff lunch box is packed full of a week's worth of mouthwatering, sweet-smelling, lunchtime munchies. You won't be willing to trade even the tiniest crumb!
2. Growing Vegetable Soup/A Sembrar Sopa De Verderus (4-8 yr olds) By: Lois Ehlert  
A father and child share the simple joys of planting, watering and watching seeds grow in their garden. Then they cook their harvest into a delicious vegetable soup, the recipe for which is included. Brightly-colored collage illustrations.
3. Let's Eat (4-8 yr olds) By: Ana Zamorano  
This picture book celebrates love and the good meals, - that Antonio's family enjoys. A glossary explains the Spanish words sprinkled throughout the text.



## Websites

1. Grains Nutritional Information Center: Investigate this excellent educational site to check out grain-based breakfast recipes; great grain graphics that you can download to use on your menus; and lots of accurate nutrition information. <http://wheatfoods.org>
2. Food Allergies in Children: A pediatrician's guide to children's health and safety. Wide-ranging information from nutrition to food safety, is divided into stages from newborn to adolescent. <http://www.keepkidshealthy.com>
3. Virginia Cooperative Extension Preschool Nutrition Pages: Developed by an award-winning dietitian (Ann Hertzler, PhD, RD), the pages offer a wide variety of topics - from the ABC's of feeding preschoolers to food safety for toddlers. One unique topic is "Kids, Food and Money." This publication is packed with ideas on teaching kids to become savvy shoppers. Even preschoolers can begin to learn about comparison-shopping. <http://www.ext.vt.edu>

### Comments & Suggestions

If you have any comments or suggestions, please e-mail us at [cealameda@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cealameda@ucdavis.edu)

Please take a moment to complete our survey. We look forward to hearing from you.

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