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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Bigger is Not Always Better!**

Most of us tend to underestimate the amount of food we eat and tend to overestimate the recommended portion sizes for many foods. It's no surprise that we do not notice how large a portion of food we are eating or giving to our children these days. Especially not since everything from bagels to soda has increased dramatically in size over the years. In fact, according to the National Institute for Health, 20 years ago, a 3-inch bagel had 140 calories. Today, the average bagel is 6-inches in diameter and has about 350 calories. The 140 calorie bagel is now called the "toaster" bagel. Even the size of soda has increased from a small soda size at 6.5 ounces or 85 calories to 20 ounces or 250 calories.

Eating smaller portions of food is one of the easiest ways to cut back on eating too many calories and maintain the health of you and your children. Relating portion sizes of food to everyday items is an easy way to visualize what a portion size should be:

- 3 ounces of meat: size of a deck of cards or bar of soap
- 3 ounces of fish: size of a checkbook
- 1 ounce of cheese: size of 4 dice
- Medium potato: size of a computer mouse
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter: size of a ping pong ball
- ½ cup pasta: size of a tennis ball
- Average bagel: size of a hockey puck
- Medium apple or orange: the size of a tennis ball

Children need adequate calories to meet their needs for healthy growth. However, portions that are too large could lead to overeating and may seem overwhelming to young children. Start children off with smaller amounts of food on their plate and encourage them to ask for more if they are still hungry. Be aware of larger portions in restaurants too and remember that bigger is not always better.

For specific portion size recommendations for young children, go to [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov). Parents and childcare providers can learn more about portion sizes and healthy eating for young children through the UCCE's Nutrition BEST program at (530) 889-7350 or visit us at <http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu>.

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