

# Combating Portion Distortion

**Portion sizes have grown dramatically since the 1970's. In some cases, up to 200%. This 'portion creep' is one of the main factors increasing obesity in Ireland, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.**

Research shows that people eat more when presented with larger food portions. Put simply, larger portions encourage us to eat more and shape our view of what is a normal amount to eat.

This highlights the important role of environment in influencing how much people eat. There is a tendency to overestimate the amount we should be eating. This can contribute to over-eating and weight gain.



## Our top 5 tips to get customers on side and combat portion distortion!

1. **Build awareness of portion size** and the benefits to catering staff and company employees. Remember it's important to work with where your employees are at!
2. **Gradually reducing portion sizes**, little by little, is the best approach.
3. **Offer attractive replacements** e.g. if reducing meat portions increase serving of vegetables /salad.
4. **Ensure consistent serving sizes** are served by all catering staff.
5. **Display calories on menus.** Research shows calories on menus helps in bringing about reduced portions.



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## How to achieve our criteria for portion sizes?

1. **Give customers the correct serving size** as illustrated in the Irish Food Pyramid and charge extra for seconds.
2. **Base each meal on plenty of vegetables, salads and fruits** - Half the plate should be vegetables or salad.
3. **Ensure consistent serving sizes** are served by all catering staff. Staff briefings and education on portion sizes are essential.
4. **Ensure that the serving sizes of lean meat, poultry and fish meet the Irish Food Pyramid recommendations.** This is about 50-75g of cooked meat or poultry and is about half the size of the palm of your hand. The recommended serving size for cooked fish is 100g.
5. Traybakes, pastries and baked products, confectionary, packet sweets and biscuits should not exceed 200kcal per serving. If bought in, they should be offered only in the smallest standard single serve portion size commercially available. Often the 'taste' is all people want.
6. The portion size of muffins and scones should be limited to 80g and 60g, respectively, as these foods have often seen significant 'portion creep' over time.