

## Beginning the New Year Cutting Calories and Portions

People are eating more food these days because food is available everywhere. We eat without thinking about how much or how often food is available. Sometimes the food eaten doesn't have much taste or eye appeals, but it is eaten any way, which can create a calorie nightmare.

People eat for many reasons and not only because there is hunger or it mealtime. There are many external eating cues including the clock, other people eating, food ads, and others that provide a constant reminder to grab a snack or meal. Unconscious eating prompts many people to consume more calories that they need.

According to Dr. James O. Hill, of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, an extra 100 to 200 calories can add up to 25 pounds of weight gain in a year for the average person. Consuming 100 to 200 calories less will do the opposite. Here are some small tips you can take to cut calories without cutting out your favorite foods:

- Serve meals on small dinner plates that are 9 to 10 inches. When we use bigger plates, we eat more. A smaller plate that is full can be just as satisfying as a big plate. The only difference is that the smaller plate, on average, contains 135 fewer calories.
- Serve meals lunch plate style. That means putting food on the dinner plates from the stove and serves the plate to each individual at the table. Use tablespoons as serving spoons and everyone will put less on their plate. You will eat 20% less than serving food from the table.
- Don't eat snacks when you are not hungry. Research indicates that people will eat stale popcorn and chips if food is available. Put away the candy dishes and food on the kitchen counter or tables. Out of sight out of mind will help you consume fewer calories.
- Use tall thin glasses for beverages instead of short, squat glasses. Tall glasses hold about 25 to 29% less so you consume fewer calories. Choose small to medium size glassware to cut beverage calories at meals and snacks and drink more water than sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Re-package snack foods such as cookies, pretzels and fruit in single serve plastic snack bags. You will eat 20% less in between meals and the small bags will help keep the snacks to 100 to 200 calories per bag.

Practice changing your food environment into one that allows you to make conscious decisions to eat smaller food and beverage portions at meals for snacks. Eating less means consuming means consuming fewer calories which will help you to lose weight and put you on the road to a healthier you.

Source: Rutgers Cooperative Extension