Portion Control: Helpful Hints

Start with a Glass of Water

- Drink a big glass of water before you eat. This will naturally help you to be less likely to overeat. Also, some symptoms of dehydration may be mistaken for hunger signals, so this may help to significantly decrease your hunger.

Wear Form-Fitting Clothes

- Wearing an outfit with a waistband or a shirt with buttons can serve as a tool to help monitor how you feel during your meal. As your clothes start to feel snug, you naturally cut back on portions.

Add Veggie Fillers

- Bulk up your meal with vegetables to help you cut calories while feeling full.
- Ex: Use spinach with pasta and stir-frys
- Ex: Swap mushrooms for ½ of the ground meat in most recipes
- Ex: Add berries to your oatmeal to incorporate extra fibre

Different Dinnerware

- Research has shown that when there is a high colour contrast between the plate and food, (ex: white plate, pasta with red sauce) people serve themselves 22% less than when there was less contrast (ex: red plate, pasta with red sauce)

Make Carbs the Top instead of the Base

- Instead of using carbohydrates as the base, fill your plate with the veggies and protein first and top it off
- Ex: Breakfast Parfait: yogurt, berries, and some granola on top (bran buds, ground flax and chia seeds could work too!)
- Ex: Stir-fry: Start with the vegetables, then add a serving of protein (tofu or chicken for example), and then add some brown or wild rice on top

Aim for Slower Eating

- Relaxing music may help to slow the speed of eating. This will also help to increase your enjoyment of the foods while decreasing portions. Remember to chew slowly, put down your fork between bites, and sip water to make your meal last longer.

Don't Eat from the Bag or Box

- Researchers from Cornell University sought to answer this question in a study and found that people ate 50% more chips when they were given no visual cues as to how large a portion should be. So if you buy a bag of pretzels or tin of nuts that contains 10 servings, divide the contents of the container into 10 smaller baggies ahead of time.

Drink your Appetizer

- Before your entrée, have some soup. Starting your meal with soup may help to cut back your total meal calories by 20%. Your best bet: a broth-based soup, preferably with vegetables to help you feel full from the natural fibre.
- Examples: chicken noodle soup, split pea soup, black bean soup, tomato soup, pho, lentil soup, butternut squash & apple soup,

Limit Mealtime Distractions

- Turn off the TV and put away your smart phone while you eat. People who multitask while eating and watching television tend to eat more. Work at an office? Try to take your lunch break away from your desk. In a study, people who ate lunch while playing computer solitaire reported feeling less full at the end and ate more throughout the day than those who didn't play the game.

Smaller Servingware and Dishes

- In a study, people given larger bowls serve themselves 31% more than those given smaller bowls. Also, those using a larger scoop served themselves 14.5% more than those using the smaller scoops.
- Aim to use a smaller serving utensil as well as a smaller dish to help control portion sizes.

Satiate your Sweet Tooth

- Trade in a new, healthier routine after meals to help signal that you're done eating. Brew a delicious decaf tea such as peppermint, cinnamon , chocolate, or a fruity variety for a very low-to-no calorie sweet-tooth satisfier.