

# MY PIECE OF THE PIE

DO YOU KNOW WHEN ENOUGH IS ENOUGH? DR ROSEMARY STANTON REPORTS.

It's easy to blame excess kilograms on too much junk food and too little exercise, but the size of the portions we eat at every meal and snack is also vitally important. Serving sizes of foods like soft drinks, yoghurt, crisps and most snack foods have grown dramatically over the years. What once would have fed the family is now often sold as an individual snack. Cereals in huge packets, giant containers of juice or ice cream, big jars of pasta sauce and other super-sized family products all encourage us to eat more.

## You got served!

Plates, bowls, mugs and glasses are now also super-sized. Several studies from Cornell University USA, first published in 2005, show that the bigger the plate or glass in front of us, the more we consume – usually without even realising it. One study found that movie-goers given really big buckets of popcorn ate about 50 per cent more than when they were given smaller buckets. Later questioning revealed that they were totally unaware they had eaten more from the big containers. Even a larger serving spoon encourages us to take more – just see what happens when you put a small spoon next to rich foods like cream or ice-cream next time you have guests.

## FRESH TIP

Fill at least half your dinner plate with veggies, one quarter with protein such as meat, fish, chicken, tofu, legumes, eggs and the last quarter with carbs like pasta, rice or potatoes.

## Downsize

The good news is that smaller plates and glasses can help you eat and drink less without feeling deprived. Use a big bowl for tossed salads and veggies, but consider downsizing everywhere else. Amanda Clark, author of *Portion Perfection*, says many people zone out when given lists of dietary options, but respond well to photographs of appropriate serves. Among her examples of 'portion' dinners, is a steak about the size of a pack of cards with three-quarters to 1 cup baby potatoes and peas or three-quarters to 1 cup stir-fried chicken with the same amount of cooked rice or noodles – always adding lots of veggies.