

# How much is TOO much

Optimum health comes from nutritional balance and knowing how much is the right amount to eat. So how much is too much? **Amanda Clark** explains.



**N**utritional balance can be achieved by eating from a broad range of foods from each of the food groups.

Everyone is a little different when it comes to energy needs. These depend on our genes and how active we are. For a general guide, refer to the table for daily calorie needs of different people. If you're very active you might increase your amount by 200 to 300 calories (Cals).

### Daily Calorie Guide

It is wise to space food out evenly throughout the day to keep your metabolism at optimal levels. Three small meals and three snacks is the

best routine for blood sugar balance, as well as craving and appetite control. For snacks, fruit and low-fat dairy products are the best choices. Aim for 100 calorie snacks for weight loss and 200 calories for weight maintenance. For meals, get to know the right amount for your calorie needs. The evening meal is when we generally over-eat.

The Portion Perfection Plate has been developed to help serve the right amount for dinner. When meals are served in the proportions of protein to carbohydrate and vegetables shown on the plate and just the base of the plate is filled to 2cm deep, then an amount of approximately 350 Cals is served which is ideal for women who want to lose weight. If you fill out to the edge of this plate at 2cm deep, this is 450 Cals which is appropriate for women at their ideal weight and for men aiming to lose weight. By adding a small bowl of fruit or yoghurt or a slice of bread to the evening meal, the meal becomes 550 Cals which is right for weight-conscious men to maintain their weight.

Achieving your optimum health could be as easy as learning what to eat and in what quantities daily. ♥

Women and inactive teens	
To lose weight	1,300 Cals (5,460 kJ)
To maintain weight	1,800 Cals (7,560 kJ)

Men and active teens	
To lose weight	1,600 Cals (6,720 kJ)
To maintain weight	2,200 Cals (9,240 kJ)

## checklist

Try this checklist to look for opportunities to improve your nutritional balance.

- Most days I have 4 or more servings of bread or cereal products (e.g. 1 cereal + 2 slices of bread + 1 serve of rice or pasta).
- I include wholegrain products most days.
- I have at least 3 different vegetables most days (salad or cooked, fresh, frozen or canned).
- Every day I include 2 fruits and 3 vegetables with a variety of colours.
- I have 1-2 servings of a protein food most days, e.g. meat, chicken, fish, eggs, cheese, dried beans and nuts.
- I usually trim the fat off my meat and remove the skin from chicken.
- I have 600mls of milk most days or equivalent amounts of yoghurt, cheese or other milk products (300mls of milk = 200mls yoghurt = 30g cheese).
- I mostly use reduced fat or low fat milk and dairy products.
- I mostly avoid cream, fried foods or fatty snacks (e.g. potato chips, corn chips).
- I use at least one teaspoon of unsaturated oil or margarine every day (olive, canola, flaxseed, etc).

Amanda Clark is an Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian and Author of *Portion Perfection: A visual weight control plan*. The book is available at [www.greatideas.net.au](http://www.greatideas.net.au)