

Abstract

A Comparison of Typical Portion Sizes to Standard Serving Sizes for College Students

Objective: The objective of this study was to compare typical portion sizes to standard serving sizes of college students. **Subjects:** Thirty college students, 20 females and 10 males were evaluated. The age range was 18 to 42 years. Sixty-seven percent of the subjects were non-nutrition majors. **Method:** First, subjects served themselves typical portion sizes of 6 foods. The typical portion size was the amount of food participants would normally consume on an eating occasion. Subjects then served themselves an estimate of what they thought was a standard serving size (estimated standard serving size) of the 6 foods. The standard serving size was represented by the recommended amount of food for one serving located on the food labels. All food selections were unobtrusively weighed and compared to standard serving sizes. **Results:** On the average, all typical portion sizes normally consumed by subjects were greater than the standard serving size represented on the food labels. However, on the average, the subjects estimated a standard serving size less than the standard serving size recommended on the food labels. Male subjects chose greater typical portion sizes than females. Subjects who were categorized as overweight chose typical portion sizes that were larger than what others chose. Typical serving sizes chosen by both nutrition and non-nutrition majors were larger than the standard serving size for at least one food item. A Likert Likelihood Scale was used to question each participant's likelihood of consuming the six food items. It was observed that as likelihood of consumption of a food increased, the amount of food chosen for a typical portion increased.

Conclusions: Overall, typical portion sizes chosen were greater than standard serving sizes recommended on the food labels. However, estimated standard serving sizes chosen by subjects were less than the “real” standard serving size, which suggests that the subjects of this study knew they chose typical portion sizes greater than the recommended standard serving size.