



food matters

with Consultant Nutritionist Sue Radd

does size matter?

Are you a plate cleaner? Do you pile on generous serves then finish everything on your plate? If so, beware: when it comes to food and this despite recent trends, bigger is not always better.

A major factor identified as a culprit in the growing obesity epidemic is the increase in food portion size, something encouraged commercially and in the media.

Researchers from the University of North Carolina revealed that in the US portion sizes have increased over the past 20 years—inside and outside the home. Similar trends are thought to be operating in Australasia.

Foods such as desserts, salty snacks, French fries, hamburgers and soft drinks are being consumed in larger serves than previously. The supersizing phenomenon stems from the fast-

food industry where the biggest growth in portion sizes has occurred and large is now the new regular. The industry offers value-added deals—larger portions for only a small increment in cost—all to extract a few more cents from each sale. These have been adding to waistlines around the world, and especially among youth and children.

It's not just what you eat that's important, but how much you have. For example, if you don't burn off the extra calories, you could expect to gain four kilograms in a year just by including the bonus extra lemonade each day.

While practising self-restraint, moderation or temperance may not be fashionable, it does work and can help you with weight control.

The French, who have lower rates of obesity,

practise "dietary restraint" and discourage snacks and an excessive intake of sweets. (They also have sensibly banned food advertising aimed at children during peak children's television times.)

curbing the urging

- ▶ Serve smaller amounts of food when eating at home.
- ▶ Choose restaurants that offer smaller portions—entree size as a main, for example.
- ▶ Avoid buffets—they encourage you to overeat.
- ▶ Avoid purchasing "value-added meals," choosing only what you need and ignoring the economies.
- ▶ Strictly limit fast-foods intake in general.
- ▶ Avoid grazing throughout the day. Many overweight people say they never actually experience hunger.