

INFO & TIPS

HEALTHY NUTRITION FOR ALL – TWITTER TALK

October 2014

The recent ADSA (Association for Dietetics in South Africa) Twitter Talk on #HealthyNutrition4All, highlighted the stark opposites that exist in South Africa. On the one hand South African's eating habits tip the scales to us becoming one of the most obese populations in the world and on the other hand one third of all food produced in South Africa goes to waste, while more than 11 million hungry people are living without the fundamental security of regular meals, according to FoodBank South Africa.

Dietitians and stakeholders including The Heart & Stroke Foundation SA, FoodBank SA, Soil For Life and Department of Health shared tips and ideas to combat both obesity and hunger:

How do you estimate portion if you don't have the tools to measure and weigh food?

- The plate model. Use this to estimate the starch, meat & vegetable content of your main meal – Heart Foundation
- By using your hands! One portion of fruit - the size of your fist – Maryke Gallagher, RD.
- I believe it is important to become in tune with your body and start learning when you are hungry or full – Karlien Duvenhage, RD
- Using your hand to guide portion size is really useful as you can use this anywhere you go – Linda Drummond, RD
- A good way is to use your hand – your palm is size of protein portion, your fist is the size of a starch portion and your full hand (or more) is the size of a veg portion – Lila Bruk, RD
- Use smaller dishes, utensils and glasses to make the meal appear 'fuller' – Heart Foundation
- Portion size go-to-guide: meat - deck of cards; carb - tennis ball; fat - your thumb; veg - free for all – Jade Seeliger, RD
- Divide plate into quarters. 1/4 protein, 1/4 starch & 1/2 vegetables. Lean protein + fist size for starch – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Research shows small works well for plates, not so much for bowls – Nathalie Mat, RD

- Measure / weigh items in a cup or on a plate once or twice helps you visualize the correct portion for future – Linda Drummond, RD
- Easy-to-understand visual helps to avoid some common portion-size pitfalls: <http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-portion-size-plate> - Cheryl Meyer, RD

Is portion control important for weight loss or should I just change the types of food that I eat?

- Initially changing to healthier food options will probably help weight loss but thereafter there will most likely be a need for portion control. Too much of a good thing is not always a good thing! – Lila Bruk, RD
- Both are equally important. It's hard to overeat healthy, nutritious foods. – Monique do Santos, RD
- Portion and type of food is important especially since many South Africans do not eat enough vegetables – Nathalie Mat, RD
- They both have a role to play. If you choose the right foods, it will help with portion control. – Karlien Duvenhage, RD
- Portion Control just as important as what you are eating, watch out for hidden fats like dressings and condiments – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Both are important, but for weight loss portion control is key – Maryke Gallagher, RD

What can we do daily to contribute towards food security in SA & shrink the huge amounts of wasted food?

- Plan proactively before going to the shops - make your shopping list by doing a quick inventory of what you have. – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- Note expiration dates & perishables that need to be used soon - then build your next meal around that food – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- Remember to rotate when unpacking groceries, be sure to use the first-in-first-out method – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- Start at home: don't peel fruit and veg – eat it all and get the fibre in too! – Maryke Gallagher, RD
- Instead of throwing leftovers away, use them for a quick & convenient lunch the next day – Heart Foundation
- 1/3 of our food goes to waste, enough to feed the 11 million hungry South Africans Plan meals in advance to avoid food wastage in your own home – FoodBank SA
- Meals made in larger quantities can be frozen on the day, to be used later. – Faaizah Asmal, RD

- Support shops who take edible food that they can't sell and donate it to NPO's or motivate your local shop to donate edible food that can't be sold to NPO's – FoodBank SA
- Take note of the 'best before' date and try to buy items that are as fresh as possible to avoid wastage – Heart Foundation
- Take stock before you shop! – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- A meal plan for week or month really helps - do it based on what is already in fridge and cupboard. – Renee Moodie
- Don't be scared of frozen food to reduce waste. Due to flash freezing the nutrient quality is often higher in frozen vs fresh – Jade Seeliger, RD
- If you have a shopping list, you will buy and eat what you need and thus decreasing potential wastage – Kezia Kent, RD
- Plan meals and snacks as far as possible and ensure you use perishable food in consecutive meals to reduce waste – Linda Drummond, RD
- Extra veggies can be blanched in boiling water, frozen and used for stir-fries or soups later – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Instead of picking on leftovers, freeze them. Great meal option when you don't feel like cooking – Jade Seeliger, RD
- Some fruit can be frozen before they reach their prime and used in smoothies when convenient – Linda Drummond, RD
- Cooking in bulk and freezing for the week may reduce food wastage and help prevent 'whats4dinner' questions – Kezia Kent, RD

How can South Africans, especially those living in urban areas grow their own food?

- By growing what we need, we decrease the "food miles" associated with long-distance transportation. – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- Start small to build confidence, potted herbs are great addition to cooking without needing green fingers – Nathalie Mat, RD
- Tyre gardens are a great way to grow veg in urban areas, very little space needed – Jade Seeliger, RD
- Use vertical spaces (terrace pots, hanging pots, wall creeping, etc) if you have limited space – Karlien Duvenhage, RD
- Garden in containers, it means you can garden across any terrain. It is possible to garden in anything! – Soil For Life
- A trough of lettuce and herbs can make a great feature on your balcony, even if you don't have a garden – Heart Foundation
- Rooftop gardens are a safe and easy place to grow your own fruit and veg garden – Maryke Gallagher, RD
- An old tyre, back of a TV, old handbag etc. Fill with half soil and half compost mix it nicely and plant. – Soil For Life

- A food garden can be started as small as the pots on your kitchen window sill – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Make sure you are planting the right vegetables at the right time of year - seasonal planting. – Soil For Life
- Keep vegetables and fruit peels to make your own compost for your veggie garden, rather than throwing these out – Heart Foundation
- Water every day and twice a day in summer. Lay down mulch (ground cover) on the ground around your plants – Soil For Life
- Learn how to use food and waste around the house instead of merely buying seeds. You will learn about the full process! – Karlien Duvenage, RD
- You can grow cherry tomatoes in a pot... important to grow things you will actually eat though. – Renee Moodie
- Neighbours can work together by buying, growing and sharing the work and rewards – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Find a space in your neighbourhood to get together to use this as a community vegetable garden – Heart Foundation
- Start by growing herbs, great way to flavour food and cut the need for salt. They freeze well too! – Jade Seeliger, RD
- Use kitchen waste to fertilize your soil! Gardening is good for the pocket and soul – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Not everyone has green fingers, find someone in your office who loves to grow their own food, contribute and share – Linda Seeliger, RD
- Use fresh herbs to make pestos, great way to add flavour to meals – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- My personal experience with a herb garden. Don't give up if you fail the first time! Practice makes perfect – Karlien Duvenhage, RD

How do we share the excess food we grow?

- There are many charities to donate to, but we can also share veggies with neighbours, domestic workers or colleagues – Heart Foundation
- I have a prolific granadilla vine - share fruit with family, friends, work, groups I belong to. – Renee Moodie
- One grows more than what can be used, potting herbs can make a great gift or package excess and share – Linda Drummond, RD
- Keep worms so they can consume any rotten veg and fruit and turn them into compost – Soil For Life
- Share with an elderly person who can't get out to shop often. – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Share with friends and neighbours or swap for produce you don't have because we need a big variety in our diets – Soil For Life
- Share home grown vegetables with those who help in your home and garden. They will be motivated to care for it when you're away – Jade Seeliger, RD

- When I go to dinner parties I take a bag of "home-growns" instead of the usual wine/choccies – Jade Seeliger, RD
- Food grows in different conditions, if you have shady areas and a friend has lots of sun, swap produce – Linda Drummond, RD
- Food insecurity affects people in all communities. Donate food to families struggling and ease the burden – FoodBank SA
- The lady that helps me in my house distributes it in her community to those in need – Karlien Duvenage, RD

Ideas and recipes for 'making over' leftovers or the perishable items in the fridge

- Making soup is a great way to use up leftover or nearly gone vegetables, and it's good for you too – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- A notepad by the fridge is a great way to record all the leftovers / perishables you put in and plan to use them up – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- Cut up and freeze overripe fruit - pawpaw/apple. Perfect for a smoothie – Heart Foundation
- Best Before dates are guidelines and not rules. Use your discretion before discarding food – FoodBank SA
- Plan one meal a week that is "leftover night". There are great apps that can help make up recipes e.g. Handpick – Karlien Duvenage, RD
- If you have wilted greens (eg lettuce), stand in bowl of cold water for an hour or so. They come back from the dead! – Renee Moodie
- Mince is a winner: so versatile. Top with cauliflower mash as cottage pie or use in omelette filling or serve in gem squash – Jade Seeliger, RD
- Leftovers are great time savers and waste savers! Roast chicken is great for chicken salad, stir fry and salad wraps – Maryke Gallagher, RD
- Fresh herbs getting less fresh by the minute? Chop into small pieces, mix with some water & freeze in ice cube tray – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- Pickling vegetables or making preserves such as chutney or jam – Soil For Life
- Eggs are great way to use leftover veggies. Omelettes are a great healthy quick meal with delicious healthy veggie filling – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Try using fruit that's near its turning point to create a delicious smoothie, a great way to prevent wasting food! – Cheryl Meyer, RD
- Blitz overripe tomatoes with fresh basil and garlic and freeze. Use later in sauces, soups, bolognese etc. – Karlien Duvenage, RD
- Chop it all up and stir-fry it over a bed of lentil rice! Quick& healthy – Faaizah Asmal, RD
- Core and slice apples. Bake in oven with sprinkle of cinnamon, sugar and lemon juice. Serve with yoghurt and add to breakfast – Karlien Duvenage, RD

- Yoghurts are great thrown into the freezer too and much lower in added sugar than the commercial frozen yoghurt – Jade Seeliger, RD
 - Leftover steak – cut into strips to add to salad for lunch the next day – Karlien Duvenage, RD
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