



Big servings lead unwary to overeat

How can a whole nation get fat? Peter Scully of Apple computer fame and previously marketing vice president of Pepsi Cola knows at least part of the reason. And so do many companies that make snack foods. The secret is in the size of the package.

Scully's task at Pepsi was to discover how to sell more Pepsi than Coke. The taste of the soft drinks were not that different. But Coke had its sexy hourglass bottle and no company seemed to be able to out-market that bottle.

A new approach was needed and Scully set out to find the answer.

He sold unlimited amounts of Pepsi inexpensively to a small number of families. What he found was that no matter how much soda a family bought in a one week period, all of the soda was consumed that week.

This led to the realization that a bigger package would sell more product. With that knowledge, the first litter soda bottle was introduced to the market.

Package sizes of every sort began to grow. After sodas, bag sizes of potato chips and pretzels grew dramatically. Single-serving and family-size bags tripled in weight. And these bigger size packages translated

into hundreds of and sometimes thousands of additional calories.

We often hear people say that they don't buy a particular product because they'll eat the whole package at one sitting. Twenty years ago that was only a small package – today it has gotten out of control. An 8-ounce soda was about 100 calories. Today, many soda machines have 20-ounce bottles. Even though the nutrition facts panel on the bottle label indicates 1 serving is 8-ounces, in most cases the bottle will be consumed by one person at one time equaling 250 calories. And don't forget the "Big Guzzler" type of sodas sold at many convenience stores!

Saimin is another example. The nutrition facts label considers half a package to be one serving. Do you eat only half the package or do you eat the whole package? The difference is at least 7 grams of added fat and 200 additional calories.

Today many other packaged or fast foods have gotten us accustomed to eating larger portions with a lot more calories. For example: bagels (from 2 ounces to 5 ounces; adding 150 calories), muffins (from 2 ounces to 6, 7 and 8 ounces with cheese; adding 500 calories). Today's wraps are equivalent to 2 tortillas or 3 or 4 slices of bread.

Consuming 100 extra calories a day more than you need translates into a body fat gain of 10 pounds a year. It doesn't matter those extra calories come from high-fat foods or low-fat foods, 3,500 extra calories equals about 1 pound of body fat.

And an important point to remember is that many "low-fat" processed foods contain as many or more calories as the "high-fat" versions because of considerable added sugar.

Buying clubs and bulk stores have added to the problem in a number of ways. People often buy larger quantities to obtain the greater savings associated with buying in bulk. What isn't always obvious is that buying bulk often just makes it easier to overeat. After all, we have all been taught no to let food go to waste and many snack foods get soggy if not consumed promptly.

Two morals of the story:

- 1) Buying food in larger packages adds money to your wallet and inches to your waist; and
- 2) Limit your bulk buying to items such as fruits and vegetables. After all – have you ever heard anyone say that they ate the whole bag of apples or carrots?

Get the point?

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