



Healthy Eating: Easy Ways to Measure Servings

Servings and portions

Everyone needs different amounts of food. The amount you need depends on your age, weight, height, gender, and how active you are. Most teens and adults need between 1600 to 2400 calories a day.

A **portion** is the amount of a certain food that you choose to eat at a meal. A **serving** is the recommended amount of a food.

What is a portion?

A portion is the amount of each food you choose to put on your plate. One way to think about portions is to picture them on your plate at each meal. Try to balance the portions on the four quarters of your plate. Use a smaller 9-inch plate, or lunch plate, when you eat to help you choose smaller amounts.

- You can eat a **variety** of fruits, grains, vegetables, protein and dairy at each meal.
- Try to eat less saturated fats, salt, and food and drinks with added sugars.
- You may want to share meals or divide up portions of packaged foods and beverages into separate meals. Portion sizes, especially at restaurants and in packaged meals are often larger than most people need.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has an online calculator to help you figure out what and how much to eat each day. Visit <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate-Daily-Checklist> to find your checklist. You can also talk to your doctor, nurse, or a registered dietitian about how many calories you need and how to balance them.

What is a serving size?

A serving size is a way to measure foods and drinks so that you eat a more balanced diet. If you know the serving size of a food or drink, you can find out how healthy it is and how much fiber, calcium, sugar, salt, and fat is in it. And you can find out how it compares to other foods.

Many ways to eat

You probably like to eat foods that taste really good. Or you may eat whatever is easiest to prepare or to buy. Some foods may have special meaning for your culture or religion.

Just a few changes in the types of foods and how much of them you eat can help you live healthier and feel better.

When you put portions of food on your plate, you can think about the serving size that you might need. You don't have to measure exactly. But if you learn the serving sizes for common foods, healthy eating will be easier for you. Here's a few more tips for making serving sizes work for you:

- Start with one serving of each item in your meal.
- Eat slowly and enjoy your meal.
- Pause and think about if you are full as you eat. You don't have to finish everything on your plate, even if a parent may have told you that long ago. It's okay to save food for later.


Most packaged food comes with a recommended serving size on the label. For other foods and drinks, you can still learn how to estimate the serving size. One easy way to do this is to compare servings of food to

everyday objects like a deck of cards, a tennis ball, or dice.

Serving size guide


Use the guide below to get a sense of what typical serving sizes look like. Try to combine items from each of the five food groups below to plan your meals.

Vegetable serving sizes



Green beans
1/2 cup


Carrots
1/2 cup




Salad
1 cup

Broccoli
1 cup

Protein serving sizes



Beef, fish, or chicken
3 oz

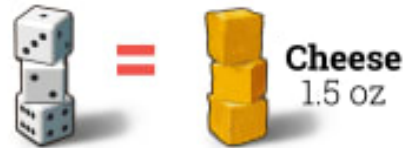


Beans
1/2 cup

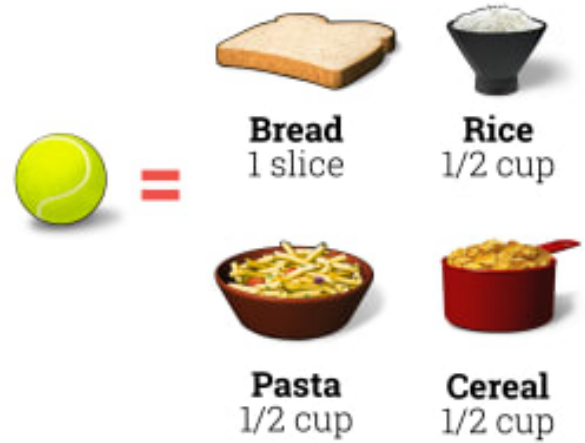
Peanut butter
1 tbsp

1 egg

Dairy serving sizes



Grains serving sizes



Fruit serving sizes

