

What is a portion size?

As our Nation's waistline expands, we need to remind ourselves of what a "portion" of food really is. Basically, when we talk about a portion size, we are talking about the amount of food that is present on a food label for which the nutritional facts have been based. Does it mean that is all you can have of any particular food? Absolutely not. What you learn when reading a food label is that for a particular amount of food there are this many calories, calories from fat, grams of fat (saturated and unsaturated), amount of carbohydrates, fiber, etc.. It is a guide to help you make an educated decision. It is a "tool" to help you raise your awareness.

Here is a list of portion sizes, listed by food group, with visual example of everyday items. If you would like to know how many daily servings you need from each group, go to www.nal.usda.gov:8001/py/pmap.htm.

A serving of bread, cereal, rice and pasta equals:

- **1 slice of bread, ½ hamburger roll, or a small pancake** – about the size of a CD.
- **One-half small bagel or small muffin** – about the size of a hockey puck.
- **One-half cup cooked rice, pasta, or hot cereal** – about a cupcake wrapper full.
- **1 ounce dried cereal** – a heaping handful

A serving of fruit equals:

- **1 medium fruit** – about the size of a tennis ball
- **One-half cup fresh or canned fruit** – about the size of a single-serving pudding cup.
- **One-fourth cup of dried fruit** – about the size of a large egg or a small handful.
- **Three-quarters cup of 100% fruit juice** – same as 6 oz. or one small can.

A vegetable serving equals:

- **One-half cup cooked, canned or fresh veggies** – about the size of a standard light bulb.
- **1 cup of leafy greens (lettuce, spinach or others)**
- **A medium potato** – about the size of a computer mouse.

A meat, fish or poultry serving equals:

- **3 ounces of meat** – about the size of a deck of cards or a cassette tape.
- **3 ounces of grilled fish** – about the size of a checkbook
- **1 egg**
- **1 cup of cooked beans, peas or lentils**
- **2 tablespoons of peanut butter** – about the size of a ping pong ball
- **1 ounce nuts** – a small handful or a shot glass

A serving of dairy foods equals:

- **8 ounces of milk** – one of those famous square cartons.
- **8 ounces of yogurt** – one of those little yogurt cartons.
- **1 to 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese** – about the size of a 9-volt battery or a bar of hotel soap.