

Making Sense of Serving Sizes

Ever wonder what the *servicing size* in guides for healthful eating look like? Below are some ways you can picture a serving size using everyday objects. Using these examples you can compare what you eat with guidelines of the Food Guide Pyramid. It may be more (*or less*) than you think!

(Note: 1. Hand and finger sizes vary from person to person! These are GUIDES only.
2. Remember that the *portion* that is right for you may be more than one serving.)

The Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta Group

1 cup of potatoes, rice, pasta (2 servings)is a tennis ball,
($\frac{1}{2}$ cupis an ice cream scoop)
1 pancake.....is a compact disc (CD)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cooked cup rice.....is a cupcake wrapper full
1 piece of cornbread.....is a bar of soap
1 slice of bread.....is an audiocassette tape
1 cup of pasta, spaghetti, cereal (2 servings)is a fist
2 cups of cooked pasta (4 servings).....is a full outstretched hand

The Vegetable Group

1 cup green salad.....is a baseball or a fist
1 baked potato (2 servings).....is a fist
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup tomato juice.....is a small styrofoam cup
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked broccoli.....is a scoop of ice cream or a light bulb
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving.....is 6 asparagus spears; 7 or 8 baby carrots or carrot sticks or 1 ear of corn on the cob

The Fruit Group

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of grapes (15 grapes).....is a light bulb
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh fruit.....is 7 cotton balls
1 medium size fruit.....is a tennis ball or a fist
1 cup of cut-up fruit.....is a fist
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup raisins.....large egg

The Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese Group

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces cheese.....is a 9-volt battery, 3 dominoes or your index and middle fingers
1 ounce of cheese.....is a pair of dice, your thumb or 1" cube
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of ice cream.....is a scoop

The Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts Group

- 2 tablespoons peanut butter.....is a ping-pong ball
- 1 teaspoon peanut butter.....is a fingertip
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter.....is a thumb tip
- 3 ounces cooked meat, fish, poultry.....is a palm of hand, a deck or cards
or a cassette tape
- 3 ounces grilled/baked fish.....is a checkbook
- 3 ounces cooked chicken.....is a chicken leg and thigh or breast

Fats, Oils and Sweets

- 1 teaspoon butter, margarine.....is the size of a stamp the thickness of
your finger or a thumb tip
- 2 tablespoons salad dressing.....is a ping-pong ball

Snack Foods

- 1 ounce of nuts or small candies.....is one handful
- 1 ounce of chips or pretzels.....is two handfuls
- 1/2 cup of potato chips, crackers or popcorn.....is one man's handful
- 1/3 cup of potato chips, crackers or popcorn.....is one woman's
handful

Serving Dishes/Utensils

- 1/2 cup.....is a small fruit bowl, a custard cup or mashed
potato scoop
- 1 1/2 cups.....is a medium cereal/soup bowl
- 2 cups of pasta, noodles (4 servings).....is a dinner plate, not heaped
- 1/2 cup of pasta, noodles.....is a cafeteria vegetable dish

You might want to know that...

- 1 cupped hand holds 2 tablespoons of liquid if you don't have measuring spoons
- 1 slice of bread is one ounce or 1 serving; some rolls or bagels weigh 3 to 5 ounces or more making them equal to 3 to 5 servings of bread

Sources Environmental Nutrition, April 1994

First Magazine, August 30, 1993
Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment
Mademoiselle, September 1993
National Pasta Association newsletter

Nutrition Action, November 1996
Skim the Fat by the American Dietetic Association, 1995

Tufts University Diet and Nutrition Letter, September 1994