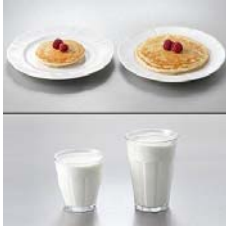


Slide show: Guide to portion control for weight loss

By Mayo Clinic staff

Portions vs. servings



Struggling with your weight? Check your portion control. You may be confusing portion control and servings. A portion is the amount of food you put on your plate. A serving is a specific amount of food defined by common measurements, such as cups or tablespoons. For instance, a pancake serving is 4 inches (as shown on the left). But a typical portion you might eat is 6 inches — or 2 servings. Similarly, a serving of milk is 8 ounces, but the portion you pour might be twice that size, like the one on the right. If your portion control is out of control, you may be supersizing your meals and yourself. Use this guide to become a better judge of portion control and serving sizes.

Daily serving recommendations

Food Group	Daily calorie goals		
	1,200	1,400	1,600
Vegetables	4 or more	4 or more	5 or more
Fruits	3 or more	4 or more	5 or more
Carbohydrates	4	5	6
Protein/Dairy	3	4	5
Fats	3	3	3

The serving sizes in this guide are part of the Mayo Clinic Healthy Weight Pyramid, a food pyramid designed to promote weight loss and improve long-term health. This chart shows the recommended number of daily servings for each major food group for three sample calorie levels. The specific calorie level you should follow depends on your weight-loss goals using the Mayo Clinic Healthy Weight Pyramid. If you're losing weight too fast or you're too hungry, you may need to adjust your calorie level.

Using visual cues



You don't need to memorize a food list or carry around measuring cups to get a better grasp on serving sizes. Instead, use common visual cues to remind yourself of appropriate serving sizes. How? Many foods match up to everyday objects. For example, a medium pepper is about the size of a baseball and equals one vegetable serving.

While not all foods perfectly match visual cues, this method can help you better judge serving sizes and practice portion control, which may help with weight loss. If you think the servings seem small, don't panic. Remember that you can eat multiple servings every day from each food group in the Mayo Clinic Healthy Weight Pyramid.

Fruits: Oranges



One medium orange is about the same size as a tennis ball and equals one fruit serving, or about 60 calories.

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Fruits: Apples and more



One small apple is about the same size as a tennis ball and equals one fruit serving, or about 60 calories.

Other fruit servings

Fruits	1 serving (60 calories)
Applesauce, sweetened	1/3 cup
Banana	1 small
Cherries	15 whole
Strawberries, whole	1 1/2 cups
100 percent fruit juice, unsweetened	1/2 cup

Vegetables: Cooked carrots



Half a cup of cooked carrots is about the same as half a baseball and equals one vegetable serving, or about 25 calories.

Vegetables: Raw spinach and more



Two cups of raw leafy spinach are about the same as two baseballs and equals one vegetable serving, or about 25 calories.

Other vegetable servings

Vegetable	1 serving (25 calories)
Asparagus, cooked	6 spears (1/2 cup)
Cauliflower	1 cup florets (about 8)
Green beans, canned or frozen	2/3 cup
Tomato sauce, canned	1/3 cup
Zucchini, cooked or fresh	3/4 cup

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Carbohydrates: Cooked pasta



Half a cup of whole-grain cooked pasta is about the same size as a hockey puck and equals one carbohydrate serving, or about 70 calories.

Carbohydrates: Brown rice and more



One-third of a cup of cooked brown rice is about the same size as a hockey puck and equals one carbohydrate serving, or about 70 calories.

Other carbohydrate servings

Carbohydrate	1 serving (70 calories)
Bagel, whole-grain	1/2 bagel (3-inch)
Bun or roll, whole-grain	1 small
Cereal, cold, flake-type	3/4 cup
Crackers, whole-wheat	8
Muffin, any flavor	1 small

Protein/dairy: Cottage cheese



Two-thirds of a cup of low-fat cottage cheese is about the same as four dice and equals one protein/dairy serving, or about 110 calories.

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Protein/dairy: Cheese and more



One and a half to 2 ounces of low-fat hard cheddar cheese is about the same size as three to four dice and equals one protein/dairy serving, or about 110 calories.

Other protein/dairy servings

Protein/dairy	1 serving (110 calories)
Cheese, ricotta, part-skim	1/3 cup
Cheese spread, American	1 ounce
Milk, skim or 1%	1 cup
Soy milk, low-fat	1 cup
Yogurt, plain, unsweetened	2/3 cup

Protein/dairy: Chicken



A 2.5-ounce piece of cooked skinless chicken is about the same size as two-thirds of a deck of cards and equals one protein/dairy serving, or about 110 calories.

Protein/dairy: Hamburger and more



A 2-ounce patty of cooked lean hamburger is about the same size as two-thirds of a deck of cards and equals one protein/dairy serving, or about 110 calories.

Other protein/dairy servings

Protein/dairy	1 serving (110 calories)
Baked beans, canned	1/2 cup
Egg	1 whole
Fish (haddock), grilled or broiled	3 ounces
Pork sausage, smoked	2 small links
Tofu, firm or silken soft	2 slices (1-inch width)

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Fats: Mayonnaise



Two teaspoons of regular mayonnaise are about the same size as two dice and equal one fat serving, or about 45 calories.

Fats: Almonds and more



It's easy to overestimate a serving of almonds and other nuts because they're so small. Just seven whole almonds (or 4 teaspoons slivered) equal one fat serving, or about 45 calories.

Other fat servings

Fat	1 serving (45 calories)
Avocado	1/6 section of fruit
Bacon, pork	1 slice
Butter, regular	1 teaspoon
Peanut butter, chunky or smooth	1.5 teaspoons
Salad dressing, ranch, regular	2 teaspoons

Sweets



Foods in the sweet group of the Mayo Clinic Healthy Weight Pyramid include sugar-sweetened beverages, candies, cakes, cookies, pies, doughnuts and added table sugar, among many others. The pyramid recommends that if you eat sweets, you limit them to 75 calories a day. For convenience, you can average the calories out over a week, but aim for less than 500 sweet calories a week.

Other sweet servings

Sweet	1 serving (75 calories)
Hard candy peppermints	4 pieces
Jelly beans, regular	8 pieces
Jelly beans, small	20 pieces
Maple syrup	1.5 tablespoons
Sweetened cola	6 ounces (1/2 can)

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Putting it all together



It may take some practice to become a better judge of serving sizes and portions, especially as you put entire meals together. But the more you practice visualizing the cues, the more control you'll have over portion sizes. Controlling portion sizes also means controlling calories — and that's key to achieving your weight-loss goals.

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