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## Healthy Living Articles

### Making Sense of Portion Sizes

Many of us tend to underestimate the amount of food we eat and tend to overestimate the recommended portion sizes for many foods.

For example, try pouring out your usual portion of pasta and measure it! Then, compare it to the label portion size. Chances are, you're eating two, three, four or more times the amount on the label.



Relating the portion size of a serving to everyday items is an easy way to visualize what a true portion size looks like.

- **Woman's fist or baseball** - a serving of vegetables or fruit is about the size of your fist
- **A rounded handful** - about one half cup cooked or raw veggies or cut fruit, a piece of fruit, or ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta - this is a good measure for a snack serving, such as chips or pretzels
- **Deck of cards** - a serving of meat, fish or poultry or the palm of your hand (don't count your fingers!) - for example, one chicken breast, ¼ pound hamburger patty or a medium pork chop
- **Golf ball or large egg** - one quarter cup of dried fruit or nuts
- **Tennis ball** - about one half cup of ice cream
- **Computer mouse** - about the size of a small baked potato
- **Compact disc** - about the size of one serving of pancake or small waffle
- **Thumb tip** - about one teaspoon of peanut butter
- **Six dice** - a serving of cheese
- **Check book** - a serving of fish (approximately 3 oz.)
- **Eyeball it!** - Take a look at the recommended serving sizes on the new [USDA MyPyramid Food Guidance System](#). Get out a measuring cup or a food scale and practice measuring some of your favorite foods onto a plate, so that you can see how much (or how little!) a ½ cup or 3-ounce serving is. This will help you "eyeball" a reasonable serving!

Children need adequate calories to meet their needs for growth. On the other hand, portions that are too large could lead to overeating or seem overwhelming.

Serving small portions to young children is often the best way for them to learn to eat only until satisfied, instead of overeating. Start kids off with less and encourage them to ask for more if they're still hungry.

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