

Choose Healthy Food Portions

Many people think that a portion of food is the same as a serving, but they can be different.

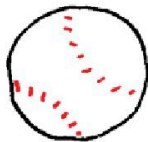






A **portion** is the amount of food that you plan to eat at one time. A **serving** is a set amount of food according to Canada's Food Guide. The serving sizes in Canada's Food Guide are examples of healthy portions. To find out how many servings of each food group your family needs in a day, see Canada's Food Guide on the Health Canada website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php.

Why is it important to choose healthy portions?

Choosing healthy portions of food can help you reach and stay at a healthy weight. Many people choose portions that are larger than the amounts suggested in Canada's Food Guide. When this happens too often, your daily intake of calories is too high. This can result in unhealthy weight gain.

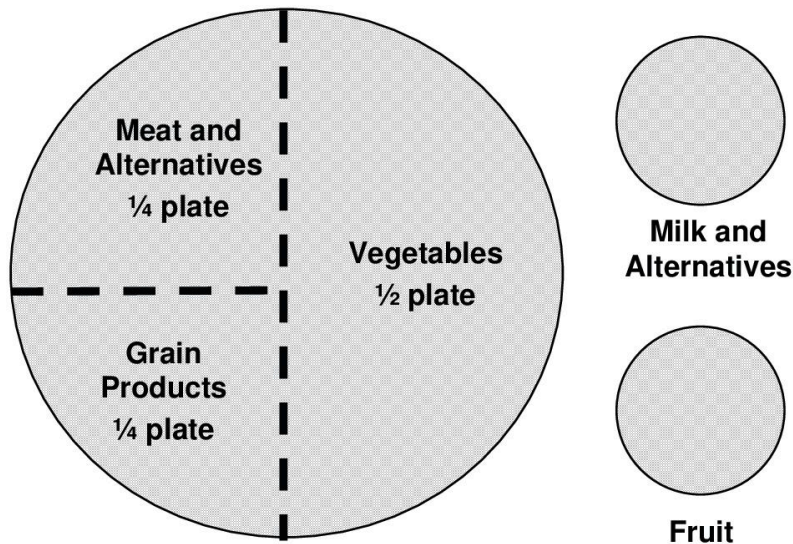
What does a serving from Canada's Food Guide look like?

Compare the items below to your food portions. This can help you decide how many Canada's Food Guide servings are in your meals and snacks. You do not need to weigh or measure foods to know the serving size.

Item	Amount	Food	Number of servings from Canada's Food Guide
Baseball 	1 cup (250 mL)	Salad	1 serving of Vegetables and Fruit
		Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables or fruit	2 servings of Vegetables and Fruit
		Cold cereal	1 serving of Grain Products
		Rice, pasta, bulgur or quinoa	2 servings of Grain Products
		Milk	1 serving of Milk and Alternatives
Tennis ball 	¾ cup (175 mL)	Whole vegetable or fruit, medium size	1 serving of Vegetables and Fruit
		Hot cereal	1 serving of Grain Products
		Yogurt	1 serving of Milk and Alternatives
		Beans, lentils, or tofu	1 serving of Meat and Alternatives
Hockey puck 	½ cup (125 mL)	Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables and fruit	1 serving of Vegetables and Fruit
		Rice, pasta, bulgur, quinoa, couscous, ½ small bagel	1 serving of Grain Products
	2½ oz (75 g)	Fish, shellfish, poultry, or lean meat	1 serving of Meat and Alternatives
2 white erasers 	1½ oz (50 g)	Cheese	1 serving of Milk and Alternatives
Golf ball 	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	Peanut or nut butter	1 serving of Meat and Alternatives
2 golf balls 	¼ cup (60 mL)	Dried fruit	1 serving of Vegetables and Fruit
		Nuts and seeds	1 serving of Meat and Alternatives
Dice or thumb tip 	1 tsp (5 mL)	Butter, margarine, oil, or mayonnaise	Oils and Fats

What does a healthy portion of food look like in a meal?

The picture below shows a healthy meal. First, start with a smaller plate. When filling the plate, try to include foods from at least three of the four groups of Canada's Food Guide. Imagine the plate separated into three parts. A healthy plate will have the large part of the plate filled with Vegetables and/or Fruit. The two smaller parts of the plate are for small servings of Meat or Alternatives and Grain Products. To complete your meal add servings of Milk and Alternatives and fruit on the side.



Tips for choosing healthy portion sizes:

- Have breakfast every day. It may help control hunger later in the day.
- Eat at least three balanced meals a day. Balanced meals have at least three to four food groups from Canada's Food Guide.
- Vegetables and fruit make up the largest part of Canada's Food Guide. Include them in all your meals.
- Have a snack if needed. Vegetables, fruits and milk or milk alternatives make healthy snack choices.
- Pick a healthy place to eat your meals, such as your kitchen or dining room. Try not to eat when doing other activities, such as watching TV or working at the computer.
- Serve your plate in the kitchen instead of at the table. Having bowls of food on the table makes it easy to take second helpings. Put leftovers away before you eat.
- Use smaller bowls, plates, and glasses. When we use larger dishes, we tend to eat larger portions of food.
- Stop eating when you no longer feel hungry. This is your body's message that you have had enough food. You do not have to "clean your plate".
- If you choose to eat foods that are high in fat, sugar, or salt, like cookies, candies, or chips, take a small portion and put the bag away.