

Nurses Notes on Nutrition  
Serving Size vs. Portion  
By Monica Petrella RN

We use our eyes and stomachs to decide the “portion” of food we eat, but what is the best portion? Food labels can help when they give “serving sizes”, though we most often go over what is recommended. When we eat more servings, we get more calories and can increase our over consumption! Like most everything, try to aim for balance and “everything in moderation.” Try to look at labels and eat portion sizes that are close to **serving sizes**. Eat from the six food groups. Here are some tips on what a **serving looks like**: Happy Eating!!

<b><u>Food Group</u></b>	<b><u>ONE SERVING size equals...</u></b> (pick one)	<b><u>What a serving looks like</u></b>
<b><u>Grains</u></b> – at least 6 ounces/day or 6 to 11 servings per day	One slice of bread ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal 1 cup ready to eat cereal	An ice-cream scoop size
<b><u>Fruits</u></b> - 1 ½ cups per day or 2 to 4 servings per day	1 cup fruit ½ cup dried fruit 1 cup 100% fruit juice	One piece of fruit the size of a baseball, tennis ball or lightbulb
<b><u>Vegetables</u></b> – 2 ½ cups per day or 3 to 5 servings per day	1 cup raw or cooked vegetables 1 cup vegetable juice 2 cups raw leafy greens	One vegetable the size of a baseball, tennis ball, or lightbulb
<b><u>Dairy</u></b> - 3 cups per day or 2 to 3 servings per day	1 cup milk or yogurt 1 ½ ounces natural cheese 2 ounces processed cheese	Four dice (one serving of cheese)
<b><u>Meat and Beans</u></b> - 5 ounces per day or 2 to 3 servings per day	3 ounces of meat, poultry, or fish 2 tablespoons of peanut butter ½ ounce of nuts or seeds	Deck of cards (meat) Ping-Pong ball (peanut butter)
<b><u>Oils</u></b> – 5 teaspoons ( that’s less than 2 tablespoons) per day	1 slice of bacon 2 tablespoons butter, mayonnaise, or salad dressing	Tip of a thumb

Source: Weekly Reader Current Health, Nov. 2010 vol. 34, issue 3 “Pick Your Portion” by Meredith Matthews.