

# Suggested Servings From Each Food Group

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Do you ever feel like the serving sizes on food labels, in restaurant portions and what you're hungry for don't line up? If you're looking for a simple way to eat healthy, use this handy serving size chart to get the right balance of nutrition on your plate.

[The American Heart Association recommends an overall healthy dietary pattern](#) tailored to your personal and cultural food preferences. Emphasize a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, fish, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and non-tropical, liquid plant oils. If you eat poultry or red meat, choose lean or extra lean meats or skinless poultry. Choose foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed when possible. And balance energy intake (calories eaten) and output (physical activity) to maintain a healthy body weight. It's all about making healthy choices.

## What's a serving?

A serving size is a guide. It's not a recommendation of how much to eat or drink.

The [Nutrition Facts label](#) on packaged foods will show the calories and nutrients in a typical serving size. The label can help you make healthier eating choices and identify nutrient-dense foods. The label serving size may be more or less than you usually eat.

Be aware of "[portion distortion](#)." The suggested serving size is often less than the amount you typically eat or are served, especially at restaurants. Portion sizes of food prepared outside the home have increased significantly over the years. You might need to do a little math to figure out the calories in a portion.

## What and how much should you eat?

Here are the recommended number of daily or weekly servings of each food group for adults based on eating a total of 2,000 calories per day. Your calorie needs may be different, depending on your age, activity level and whether you are trying to lose, gain or maintain your weight.

Don't worry, you don't have to measure everything you eat. We've provided a few examples of what represents one serving of common foods. You may eat more than one serving from a food group in a meal or fewer in another meal. As long as you are getting the recommended daily amounts on average over two to three days, you'll be on target.

### Vegetables

- Wide variety of vegetables; fresh, frozen, canned or dried<sup>1</sup>
- 2½ cups of vegetables daily
- **Examples of one cup of vegetables:**
  - 2 cups raw leafy salad greens
  - 1 cup cut-up vegetables
  - 1 cup 100% vegetable juice, low-sodium or no-salt-added<sup>2</sup>

### Fruits

- Wide variety of fruits; fresh, frozen, canned or dried<sup>1</sup>
- 2 cups of fruit daily

- **Examples of one cup of fruit:**

- One medium whole fruit
- 1 cup cut-up fruit
- ½ cup 100% fruit juice<sup>2</sup>
- ½ cup dried fruit<sup>1</sup>

## Grains

- Whole grain rather than refined grain products
- Three to six servings or 3 to 6 ounces of grains daily, at least half of total grains should be whole grains
- **Examples of one serving of grains:**
  - One slice whole-grain bread
  - One small tortilla
  - 1 ounce (1 cup) ready-to-eat cereal flakes
  - 1 ounce (½ cup) uncooked pasta or brown rice
  - ½ cup cooked brown rice, pasta or hot cereal, such as oatmeal
  - 3 cups popped popcorn

## Dairy

- Low-fat (1%) and fat-free
- Three servings or 3 cups daily
- **Examples of one dairy serving:**
  - 1 cup milk
  - 1 cup yogurt
  - 1½ ounces hard cheese

## Protein Foods

- Mostly from plant sources (legumes and nuts); fish and seafood; fat-free and low-fat dairy products in place of full-fat versions; if you eat meat, lean cuts and skinless poultry; avoid processed meats
- One to two servings or 5½-ounce equivalents of protein daily including:
  - 5 ounces per week of nuts, seeds, beans, peas or lentils
  - 6 to 8 ounces per week of seafood, preferably oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, cobia, striped bass, herring or sardines
- **Examples of one ounce protein equivalents:**
  - ¼ cup cooked beans, peas or lentils
  - ¼ cup or 2 ounces tofu
  - ½ ounce nuts or seeds or 1 tablespoon peanut butter
  - 1 ounce cooked seafood, meat or poultry
  - One egg or two egg whites

## Fats and Oil

- Opt for polyunsaturated and monounsaturated liquid plant oils. **Avoid** tropical oils (coconut, palm and palm kernel) and animal fats (lard and butter) or partially hydrogenated fats.
- Two to three servings of fat or oil per day (or 9 teaspoons)
- **Examples of one serving fats and oil:**
  - 1 teaspoon vegetable oil (such as canola, corn, olive, soybean, safflower)
  - 1 teaspoon soft margarine
  - 1 tablespoon low-fat mayonnaise
  - 2 tablespoons light salad dressing

<sup>1</sup>Frozen, canned and dried produce can be as nutritious as fresh. Compare nutrition information on package labels and choose products with the lowest amounts of added sugars and sodium. Look for vegetables without salty sauces and fruits packed in their own juices or water instead of heavy syrup. Drain and rinse canned produce and beans.

<sup>2</sup>Drinking 100% juice can fulfill one of your recommended daily servings of fruit or vegetables. But keep in mind, juice isn't as filling as whole fruits and vegetables and may have extra calories and less nutrients such as fiber. Avoid sweetened juice and juice drinks.



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