

Healthy Words of Wisdom

Nutrition experts recommend that you get your daily servings of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, while choosing lean protein sources and high fiber items most days of the week.



Portion sizes have changed.

Are you aware of correct portion sizes? Portion sizes of foods we eat every day have increased dramatically over the past 35 years. A serving of fries at a popular fast food restaurant once had 320 calories in 1978 while the same restaurant now serves a portion of fries with over 610 calories. Since portion sizes have increased slowly, you may have not noticed the changes or that you are now eating more.

Become an expert on portion size

There's an easy way to remember serving sizes if you don't have a guide readily available. Think games; specifically hockey pucks, tennis and playing cards. Common serving sizes

are similar to the size of a hockey puck, tennis ball or deck of cards. For instance, a small apple (the size of a tennis ball) equals one-half serving from the fruit group; a mini bagel (the size of a hockey puck) equals one serving from the grains group; and 3 ounces of chicken is about the size of a deck of cards.

Serving sizes are based on the amount of food people typically need. You may want to use the stated "serving size" as a guide and compare that to how much you actually eat. Breakfast cereal is a great example. Three-fourths of a cup or 1/2 cup is considered one serving for many brands, yet most cereal bowls will hold two cups.

The pictures to the right show some common items and compares them to serving sizes. Be aware of what you are putting on your plate.

Deck of Cards



= 3 ounces of meat

Tennis Ball



= 1/2 cup of fruit, vegetable, cooked grain, or ice cream

Hockey Puck



= size of a biscuit or mini-bagel

Read nutrition labels.

Where do you start when you look at the Nutrition Facts label? The first thing to look at is the serving size. Serving sizes are all different, though common ones are ½ cup, 1 slice, or 2 tbsp. The information given by the label, such as calories and total fat, is for the serving size. Usually, there is more than one serving per container, box, can, bag, etc. If you eat more than the serving size, simply multiply to see how many servings you’re eating. In the label below, the serving size is 1 cup and that amount contains 207 calories. If you ate the whole package, you would be eating 2 cups which would be 2 servings and contain 414 calories. Since you ate two servings, this also doubles all the other information found on the label.

You may think that your glass of juice is one serving, but have you checked the serving size on the Nutrition Facts panel? If you’re drinking from your favorite, super-sized cup, you may be drinking a lot more than one serving.

Oversized Drinking Cup



Measuring Cup



Nutrition labels contain all the information you need to make healthier choices in your daily diet.

Quick Guide to Daily Value of the Nutrition Facts Label:

- 5% or less is low
- 20% or more is high
- Get enough of these nutrients
- Limit these nutrients

Sample label for Macaroni & Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228 g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 207	Calories from Fat 56
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 6.2g	10%
Saturated Fat 2.2g	11%
Monounsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 15mg	5%
Sodium 1061mg	44%
Total Carbohydrate 29.0g	10%
Dietary Fiber 1.3g	5%
Sugars 1.3g	
Protein 8.5g	
Vitamin A	3%
Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	9%
Iron	13%

Pay attention to food packaging.

Below is a list of some other common claims seen on food packaging and what they mean, according to FDA regulations:

- Calorie-free: fewer than five calories per serving
- Low sodium: less than 140 mg of salt per serving
- Low calorie: less than 40 calories per serving
- Low cholesterol: less than 20 mg of cholesterol and 2 grams or less of fat per serving
- Low fat: 3 or less grams of fat per serving
- Reduced: 25 percent less of the specified nutrient or calories than the usual product
- Light: one-third fewer calories or one-half the fat of the usual food
- Fat-free: Less than 1/2 gram of fat per serving
- “Good source of”: provides at least 10 percent of the daily value of a particular vitamin or nutrient per serving
- High fiber: five or more grams of fiber per serving

Make Healthy Choices More Often



- Water and dietary fiber are nutrients most Americans don't get enough of which can often lead to health problems. Eating enough high fiber foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains, for example 100% whole wheat bread, may reduce the risk of heart disease and has been shown to lower cholesterol. Women should aim for 25 grams of fiber per day while men should aim for 38 grams of fiber per day.
- Use healthier cooking techniques, such as grilling, broiling, baking and boiling. Limit intakes of saturated fats, trans fats and sodium to keep

your heart healthy. Try to season with low fat and low sodium condiments, herbs and spices. Try flavored vinegars, fresh herbs and reduced sodium broths when cooking.

- Keep on track with healthy eating habits by planning meals ahead of time, eating fewer meals away from home and consuming a combination of 5 cups of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Choose foods with less added sugars, including those listed on the next page.



Choosing Food with Less Added Sugar

“Added sugars” are sweeteners and syrups that are added to foods or beverages during processing or preparation. This does not include naturally occurring sugars like those found in milk and fruits.

Some foods that contain large amounts of added sugars include:

- Regular soft drinks and sweet tea
- Candy
- Cakes
- Cookies
- Pies
- Fruit drinks, such as fruit-ades, fruit punch, and fruit beverages
- Milk-based desserts and products like ice cream, sweetened yogurt, sweetened milk, and coffee-blended drinks
- Grain products including sweet rolls, muffins, and pastries



Reading the ingredient labels on processed foods can help you identify added sugars. Here are some other common names for added sugars:

- Brown sugar
- Corn sweetener
- Corn syrup
- Dextrose
- Evaporated cane juice
- Fructose
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Glucose
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Invert sugar
- Maltose
- Malt syrup
- Molasses
- Raw sugar
- Sucrose
- Sugar syrup

Sugar Substitutes

Sugar substitutes such as sorbitol, saccharin, aspartame and rebiana are found in many foods that are considered “low calorie.” Most sugar substitutes do not provide significant calories and therefore may be useful in the diets of people concerned about calorie intake.

Foods containing sugar substitutes may not always be lower in calories than similar products that contain sugars. Remember, sugar substitutes will not assist in weight loss unless the total number of calories eaten is reduced.



References: www.nim.nih.gov; www.mealsmatter.org; www.choosemyplate.gov; www.webmd.com; www.cfsan.fda.gov