



# PORTION CONTROL ACTIVITY

A serving is the amount of food listed after the words “serving size” on the food label. But a portion is the amount of food you actually eat. The *portion* of food on your plate can be the amount of 2 or more *servings*. Depending on the food and your body’s calorie and nutrient requirements, that might be too much.

To learn more about the portion sizes you are eating, try the following activity.

## Step 1: Compare serving size to portion size.

Read the label of the food you are eating and make a note of the serving size. Next, measure out one serving of the food and look at your plate. Is this what you would normally eat as a portion?

## Step 2: Track your portions throughout the day.

Eat your normal portions for one day. For each meal, measure and record how much you eat. Then, calculate the servings and calories using the nutrition facts label on each food container. Remember, if you eat more than one serving, you are eating more calories than what’s on the label. Multiply the number of calories by the number of servings you eat.

Here is an example record for breakfast:

Breakfast	Amount	Number of Servings	Calories
Cheerios®	2 cups	2	210 calories
1-percent milk	1 cups	1	105 calories
Sugar, in coffee	1 teaspoon	1	16 calories
Orange juice	1 8-ounce glass	1	112 calories

**Total Calories: 443**

Breakfast	Amount	Number of Servings	Calories
Lunch	Amount	Number of Servings	Calories

Dinner	Amount	Number of Servings	Calories
Snacks	Amount	Number of Servings	Calories

**Total Calories:** \_\_\_\_\_

At the end of the day, calculate your total calories. Did you eat a healthy number of calories for your age, body size, and activity level? If you aren't sure what a healthy number of calories is for you, talk with your doctor or a registered dietitian. To get an idea of your calorie needs, you can use the below estimates from the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These calorie estimates are based on age, gender, and activity level. But keep in mind that your calorie needs may be higher or lower than these estimates.

#### Estimated Calorie Needs per Day for Adults

Gender	Age	Physical Activity Level		
		Not Active	Moderately Active	Active
Female	19-30	1,800 - 2,000	2,000 - 2,200	2,400
	31-50	1,800	2,000	2,200
	51 +	1,600	1,800	2,000 - 2,200
Male	19-40	2,400 - 2,600	2,600 - 2,800	2,800 - 3,000
	41-60	2,200	2,400 - 2,600	2,600 - 2,800
	61+	2,000	2,200 - 2,400	2,400 - 2,600

### Step 3: Adjust your portion sizes as needed. \_\_\_\_\_

Over the next few days, keep tracking the foods you eat. But this time, adjust your portion sizes up or down until you reach your target number of daily calories. If you need help finding the right portion sizes, talk with a registered dietitian.

### Step 4: Use common household items to estimate portion sizes. \_\_\_\_\_

Once you know what portion sizes are right for you, see if you can compare those portion sizes to common household objects. For example, the right portion of breakfast cereal for you might be the size of a baseball. Keep these objects in mind as you serve yourself food throughout your day. This may make it easier to make sure you are getting the right amount. It can also help you eat the right amounts of food when you are in situations when you can't measure out your food.

This information is not intended to take the place of regular medical care or advice. Please check with your doctor before using this information or beginning any self-care program.

## Credits

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## References

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