

Portion sizes

It is important to be aware of portion sizes as too much or too little of any type of food can increase our risk of health problems.

This is because the body may be getting too much or too little of what it needs to stay healthy. This Food Fact Sheet will provide an overview of recommended portion sizes of typical foods. As every person is different, the recommended number of portions for each food will vary, but this sheet provides a good place to get you started.

Carbohydrates – what is a portion?

What is a portion
1 medium slice of bread
Pasta (boiled) 2-3 tablespoons
Rice (boiled) 2-3 tablespoons
2 egg sized new potatoes (boiled)
1 medium baked potato (with skin)*
Breakfast cereal: 3 tablespoons
Porridge oats: 3 tablespoons

* Potatoes do not contribute to one of your 5 a day, however sweet potatoes, parsnips, swedes and turnips do.

TOP TIP: Choose wholegrains or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar. For more information, see the BDA Food Factsheet on 'Wholegrains'. Be mindful that the carbohydrate portions provided contain different amounts of carbohydrate and calories.

Dairy – what is a portion?

Type of dairy food	Portion size in grams or millilitres (ml)	What does this look like?
Milk	200ml (1/3 pint)	1 glass
Calcium fortified soya alternatives	200ml (1/3 pint)	1 glass
Yoghurt	125g	1 standard pot/ 3 tbsp
Cheese (hard)	30g	A matchbox size piece

TOP TIP: Try to always choose lower fat and lower sugar options where possible.



Protein – what is a portion?

Animal Protein	Amount in grams (g)	What does this look like?
Cooked meat (beef/pork/lamb/mince/chicken/turkey)	60g-90g	A deck of cards
Cooked white fish (cod or plaice) or canned fish	140g	Palm of hand
Cooked oily fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines)	140g	Palm of hand
2 eggs	120g	
Plant Protein	Amount in grams (g)	
4 tablespoons of baked beans	150g	
4 tablespoons of beans (kidney beans/butterbeans/black eyed beans)	150g	
4 tablespoons of pulses (lentils/chickpeas)	150g	
4 tablespoons of soya/ tofu, vegetable based meat alternative	100g	
1 tablespoon/handful of nuts or peanut butter	30g	

TOP TIP: Eat more beans and pulses, and two portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat.



Fruit and vegetables – what is a portion?

What is a portion	Amount in grams (g)
1 apple/pear/orange/banana	80g
A handful (10-12) grapes/berries	80g
2 plums/apricots/kiwis/satsumas	80g
1 small handful/ 1 tablespoon of dried fruit (eg. raisins or sultanas)	30g
3 heaped tablespoons of peas/carrots/sweetcorn/mixed vegetables	80g
1/2 pepper/1 medium tomato/ 1 medium parsnip	80g

TOP TIP: Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.

Oils and spreads – what is a portion?

Type of oil/spread	Amount in grams (g)
1 teaspoon of butter or spread	5g
1 teaspoon of oil	3g

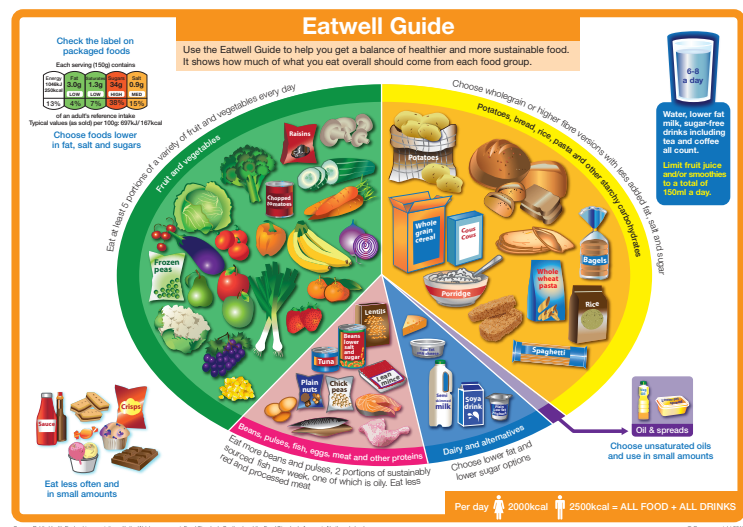
TOP TIP: Keep to a minimum/small amounts of oils and spreads and measure out. Opt for unsaturated fats.

Mixing food types and portions

People will often have more than one portion of one food type at each meal.

Based on the portion sizes above:

- a sandwich with 2 slices of bread with 2 teaspoons of butter (1 on each slice) would be 2 portions of carbohydrates and 2 portions of fats
- a meal including meat or fish plus beans or pulses would be 2 portions of protein
- a meal containing broccoli and carrots would be 2 portions of vegetables.



The Eatwell Guide (above) shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. You can find more information about the guide at www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx

We also have Food Fact Sheets available on a range of topics including Weight Loss, Malnutrition, Alcohol, getting your 5-a day and general healthy eating as well as a range of medical conditions. Visit bda.uk.com/foodfacts for more information.