



## Portion Sizes

One of the biggest obstacles that an individual faces in their quest for weight management is understanding the importance of proper portion sizes. Developing the ability to visually identify portion values of food can be your greatest ally. Imagine being able to sit down at a restaurant and know if you were eating 3oz. of meat or 6oz., if you were looking at 2 or 3 cups of pasta. Knowing this can be the difference of 200-400 calories of overeating per meal. The key to understanding portion sizes is practice and knowledge.

### Practice and Knowledge

The first place to start is by investing in a kitchen weight scale (amazon.com offers a full line) and measuring cups. Food measuring devices will help you build an accurate education process. Begin by measuring your food before you consume it and document calories per serving. Once you have accomplished measuring all the foods you consume on a normal basis, start then to guess the sizes before you measure. After a while you will start to notice that your accuracy improves.

As the identification process of measuring your foods improves, begin to gain more perspective of how much food the recommended serving sizes really are and the relation to calories. Below you will find a table of typical recommended serving sizes set up by the USDA. It is important to note that serving sizes may vary from reference amount (1 slice of bread can vary from 70-120 calories dependent on type). The USDA strives to have caloric amounts range from 60-110 calories.

<b>Proteins</b>	<b>Carbs</b>	<b>Fats</b>
3 oz. fowl / fish	½ cup berries	1 tbsp. butter
2 oz. red meat	Medium fruit	1 tbsp. olive oil
1 cup milk	½ cup pasta / rice	2 medium cookies

A good tip to help the identification process along is comparing typical serving sizes to physical objects. Below you will find a list of comparisons.

- Medium apple is the size of baseball
- 3 oz. of chicken is the size of a deck of playing cards
- Vegetables are the size of your fist
- Nuts or chips is a cupped handful
- Pasta uncooked is the size of one scoop of ice cream
- Potato is the size of a cell phone

Individuals need to be aware that the USDA serving sizes are not the same as a single serving listed on a food label. Food label serving sizes can at times be double the amount of calories as the USDA. As always education is the key to helping you understand portion sizes as they relate to single serving sizes and weight management.