

Portion Size vs. Serving Size: Understanding the Difference and Its Importance in Diabetes Management

When it comes to diabetes management, how much you eat is just as important as what you eat. Do you know if you are eating a serving size or a portion size? The difference between them can be confusing, but understanding the difference can help you make informed food choices to manage your blood glucose (blood sugar) levels and help avoid overeating.

Nutrition Facts	
Approx. 14 servings per container	
Serving size 1 slice (48g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	100
	%Daily Value*
Total Fat 0.5g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 115mg	5%
Total Carbohydrates 21g	7%
Dietary Fiber 4g	15%
Total Sugar 1g	
Includes 1g Added Sugars	2%
Protein 4g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 25mg	0%
Iron .7mg	4%
Potassium 60mg	0%
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

What is a serving size?

A serving size is the amount of food that is on a food product's Nutrition Facts label.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets these values to help you make informed decisions on what you are eating. Serving sizes are helpful for reading nutrition labels to figure out how many carbs, fiber, protein, fats, calories, and sodium are in that serving size.

What is a portion size?

A portion size is the amount of food you eat in a meal, and it can be more or less than the serving size on the Nutrition Facts label. Often, portion sizes eaten will exceed the serving size listed.

Why portion size is important

If you live with diabetes, knowing how many carbs are in the portion you eat will help you manage your blood glucose levels. Even when choosing healthier foods, large portion sizes can raise your blood glucose level or be a setback to your other health goals. Studies show that people frequently think they are eating less than they're eating, especially when dining out or when eating food directly from a package.

By understanding the difference between a serving size and a portion size, you'll be able to know how many carbs you're eating to help prevent spikes in your glucose.

Food Portion Tips



1

Review the Nutrition Facts label. Focus on the total grams of carbs, fiber, saturated fat, sodium, serving size, and number of servings in the package as a guide for your meals and snacks.



2

Measure it out. Use measuring cups, measuring spoons, or a food scale to be sure you have the portion you need. Over time, you'll get better at estimating serving size vs. portion size.



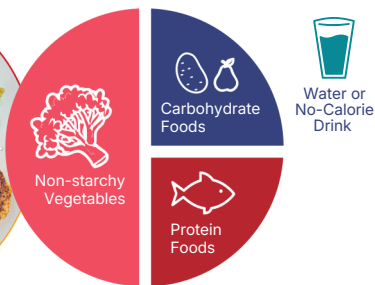
3

Pre-portion snacks. Instead of eating directly from the package, try putting your snacks into smaller containers or bags with your serving size already measured.



4

Use the Diabetes Plate. This visual guide for dividing your plate can be helpful. Grab a nine-inch plate and fill halfway with non-starchy vegetables, one-quarter with lean protein, and one-quarter with quality carbohydrates such as starchy vegetables, beans and legumes, fruit, whole grains, milk, or yogurt. The Diabetes Plate can help you balance portions without counting, calculating, weighing, or measuring.



5

Practice mindful eating when dining out. Restaurants frequently serve two to three times the standard serving size. Think about sharing a meal, asking for a to-go box at the start of the meal and store half before eating, or putting the portion of food you want to eat on a separate plate.

Being aware is the most important tip. Understanding the difference between serving size and portion size can help you make informed food choices, avoid overeating, and help you manage diabetes.