

# Your balanced diet

## Get portion wise!

The right types of foods and drinks in the right amounts for you!

**Putting it into practice.**



Co-funded by the  
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# Getting portion size right for you

We're all individuals with different needs. For healthy adults the types of different foods and drinks we need are pretty much the same for all of us. But the amount of food we need varies from person to person.

The portion sizes in this guide are averages for healthy adults. If you're tall or very active you may need more, if you're a small person or are trying to lose weight you may need smaller portions. There are lots of different ways to eat a healthy, balanced diet – you can use this guidance to fit with your preferences and beliefs – from a flexitarian (plenty of plant foods with some animal foods), to a vegetarian or vegan diet.



Eating a balanced diet is about having the right types of foods and drinks in the right amounts for you!

# How to use this guide

Getting the right types of foods and drinks in the right amounts for you = a healthy, balanced diet! This guide shows how you can choose appropriate portion sizes for foods and drinks from different food groups for your meals and snacks to get a balanced diet over a day.

We've used the same food groups as shown in the [Government's Eatwell Guide](#) and suggested how often you could have foods and drinks from each group across the day.

These are:



	At least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables	5+
	3-4 portions of starchy foods	3-4
	2-3 portions of protein foods	2-3
	2-3 portions of dairy/alternatives	2-3
	Small amounts of unsaturated oils and spreads	





# Putting it into practice

Here are some examples of how this could work across a day for different dietary preferences.

## Flexitarian day (plenty of plant foods with some animal foods)

Meal	Foods included				
Breakfast	Porridge (one and a half handfuls of dried oats) made with semi-skimmed milk		✓		✓
	Pumpkin seeds, about the amount that fits in your palm, to sprinkle on top			✓	
	3 dried apricots	✓			
	Banana	✓			
	Small glass (150ml) of orange juice	✓			
Morning snack	Mini cheese wheel				✓
	Cherry tomatoes (about 7)	✓			
Lunch	Half a standard can (400g) of baked beans on 2 slices of toasted seeded bread with reduced fat spread		✓	✓	
	Handful of red grapes	✓			
Afternoon snack	Apple	✓			
Evening meal	Baked salmon fillet topped with 3 tsp soft cheese served with about 6 small new potatoes		✓	✓	✓
	3 serving spoons or more of spring greens and peas	✓			
	Stewed plums and blackberries with cinnamon	✓			
TOTAL PORTIONS PER DAY		8	3	3	3





## Flexitarian day

Meal	Foods included				
Breakfast	Wholegrain cereal and milk		✓		✓
	A banana	✓			
	Small glass of orange juice	✓			
Morning snack	An apple	✓			
Lunch	Tuna and sweetcorn sandwich		✓	✓	
	Carrot sticks (about 8 sticks – 1 carrot)	✓			
	2 satsumas	✓			
Afternoon snack	Cheese and oatcakes		✓		✓
Evening meal	Spaghetti bolognese made with plenty of vegetables, served with wholewheat spaghetti (use your finger and thumb to measure a bunch of spaghetti the size of a £1 coin per person)	✓	✓	✓	
	3 serving spoons or more of broccoli	✓			
	Small pot of fruit yogurt				✓
TOTAL PORTIONS PER DAY		7	4	2	3

A vegetarian day

Meal	Foods included				
Breakfast	3 handfuls of bran flakes with semi-skimmed milk		✓		✓
	Slice of wholemeal toast with yeast extract		✓		
	3 dried apricots	✓			
	Small glass (150ml) of orange juice	✓			
Morning snack	Small pot of low-fat fruit yogurt				✓
	Banana	✓			
Lunch	Shop-bought egg and cress sandwich on malted bread		✓	✓	
	Handful of red grapes	✓			
	Cherry tomatoes (about 7)	✓			
Afternoon snack	¼ standard pot of reduced fat houmous			✓	
	Carrot sticks	✓			
Evening meal	Veggie bean quesadillas made with wholemeal tortillas and cheddar cheese	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Cereal bowl full of mixed salad	✓			
TOTAL PORTIONS PER DAY		8	4	3	3

A vegan day

Meal	Foods included				
Breakfast	Toasted bagel with fortified yeast extract spread		✓		
	Banana	✓			
	Small glass (150ml) of orange juice	✓			
Morning snack	2 satsumas	✓			
	Latte made with unsweetened fortified dairy alternative				✓
Lunch	Pitta bread with ¼ standard pot of reduced fat houmous, grated carrot, red pepper and lettuce	✓	✓	✓	
Afternoon snack	3 small rice cakes with vegan soft cheese alternative				✓
	Mixed unsalted nuts, about the amount that fits in your palm			✓	
Evening meal	Chickpea and vegetable curry served with brown rice (allow 2 handfuls of dried rice per person)	✓	✓	✓	
	3 serving spoons or more of peas	✓			
TOTAL PORTIONS PER DAY		6	4	3	2

## Foods and meals prepared at home

With foods or meals made up of more than one food group (e.g. a sandwich, a pasta dish with meat sauce and vegetables) that you make at home yourself, you can use the portion sizes provided for each of the food groups as a guide for how much to cook and serve. Here are some examples for how this could work for different dishes. These examples are not full recipes. They are suggestions to give you an idea of the portion sizes you could use for different ingredients when you are combining them to make a meal. When you are making dishes you already know how to make, or looking up new recipes, you can think about how to adapt them so that the portion sizes suit you.

### Spaghetti bolognese

- Allow about 75g of uncooked spaghetti per person (you can measure a portion for one person by using your finger and thumb to make a hole the size of a £1 coin) or more if you are cooking for people with higher than average calorie needs or if you want leftovers.
- The portion size we give is about 125g of raw mince (1/4 of a 500g pack) per person. You could halve this in a dish which has lots of other ingredients. And you could replace some or all the meat with meat-free mince or pulses.
- Add plenty of vegetables – these can be added to the bolognese sauce, which often includes onion, tomatoes (fresh, canned or as part of a ready-made sauce), carrots and celery – but add any others that you like. You can also serve the dish with a side salad or cooked vegetables.
- If you're using a cook-in sauce, you can boost the dish by adding extra vegetables – you could try ready-prepared, canned or frozen vegetables to save time.



### Fish pie

- Allow about 180g mashed potato per person (about 3 average sized potatoes)
- Allow around 120-200g raw fish per person – a small, raw fillet of fish is about 120-140g
- Add vegetables if you can (e.g. frozen peas or spinach).



## Veggie bean quesadillas

- Use half a can of red kidney beans (120g drained weight) per person – other canned beans like mixed beans or black beans work well too so use whatever you have in the cupboard.
- Add plenty of vegetables like onions, peppers and courgette.
- Allow one wrap per person for a light meal or two for a bigger meal.



## Chickpea and veggie curry

- Allow about 65g brown rice per person (about 2 handfuls each).
- Add plenty of vegetables like mushrooms and spinach.
- Allow half a can of chickpeas per person (120g drained weight) - or you can use other canned or dried pulses such as lentils instead.

**Remember to serve with plenty of cooked vegetables or salad.**

## Treats (foods high in fat, salt and/or sugar)

Everyone knows that these are the foods we are supposed to eat less of! They are not needed in the diet, but you may wish to include them alongside the kinds of meals and snacks we've suggested in this guide. If you do eat them, then it's best to keep portion sizes small - so they provide around 100-150 kcal. You can look at the traffic light labels on the front of packs to go for those with less fat, salt or sugar. Look out for foods and drinks with fewer red traffic lights and more greens and ambers. Sugary drinks are included in this group – these can contribute a lot of sugar and calories. It's best to choose drinks that don't contain added sugar.

**Here are a few suggestions for some healthier snack choices**

You could have...	But why not try instead...
4 small squares of chocolate	Dried fruit or a small pot of fruit yogurt
A small ice cream	Plain low-fat yogurt sprinkled with frozen berries or a fruit smoothie (maximum of 150ml of smoothie a day)
2 small biscuits	2 rice cakes topped with nut butter
A small bag of crisps	Small handful of unsalted mixed nuts and seeds or a small bag of popcorn
A mini muffin	A crumpet or slice of fruit loaf with low-fat spread

[For a full list of portion sizes for each food group, see our full portion size list booklet](#)



These guides were originally developed by the British Nutrition Foundation, with guidance from a panel of expert scientists and financial support from: Alpro, Asda, Associated British Foods, Mars, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Tetrapak and Waitrose & Partners.

Subsequent evaluation and revision has been funded by EIT Food, the world's largest food innovation ecosystem, supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the EU.

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