Make half your grains whole

The grain group includes all foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, and barley, such as bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits. Eat at least 3 oz. of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day.

1 oz. =

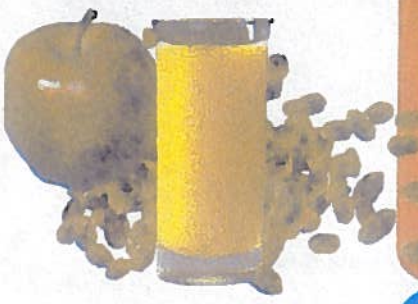
- 1 slice bread
- 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal
- 1/2 cup cooked rice or pasta
- 1 flour tortilla (6" dia.)
- 1 corn tortilla (6" dia.)

Vary your veggies

The vegetable group includes all fresh, frozen, canned, and dried vegetables, and vegetable juices. Eat more dark-green veggies, like broccoli, spinach, and other dark leafy greens, and more orange veggies, like carrots and sweet potatoes. Try to eat more dry beans and peas, like pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils.

1 cup =

- 1 cup raw vegetables
- 1 cup cooked vegetables
- 1 cup vegetable juice
- 2 cups raw leafy greens



Focus on fruits

The fruit group includes all fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits, and fruit juices. Eat a variety of fruit — aiming to include fruit in every meal. Choose fruit juice less often, with no more than one third of your fruit total in juice.

1 cup =

- 1 cup cut-up fresh fruit
- 1 medium fresh fruit
- 1 cup canned fruit
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice
- 1/2 cup dried fruit

milk Get your calcium-rich foods

The milk group includes all fluid milk products, and foods made from milk that retain their calcium content, such as yogurt and cheese. Most milk group choices should be fat-free or low-fat.

Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not part of the group.

1 cup =

- 1 cup low-fat or fat-free milk
- 1 cup low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- 1.5 oz. natural cheese
- 2 oz. processed cheese
- 2 cups cottage cheese

meat & beans Go lean with protein

Choose lean meats, poultry, or fish that are baked, broiled, or grilled. Vary your protein routine — choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.

1 oz. =

- 1 oz. lean meat, poultry, or fish
- 1 egg
- 1 Tbsp. peanut butter
- 1/2 oz. nuts or seeds
- 1/4 cup cooked dry beans, peas, and lentils

physical activity

30 minutes
recommended most days of the week.

60 minutes
for children or teens most days. 60 minutes may also be needed to prevent weight gain.

60 - 90 minutes
may be required to sustain weight loss.

know your limits

Keep saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium low.

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, such as vegetable, canola, corn, olive, soybean, and sunflower oil. Between the ages of 4 and 18 years, keep total fat intake between 25% - 35% of calorie intake. Make choices such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils for fatty acid intake.

Adapted from USDA's 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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What counts as 1 ounce of grains?

1 slice bread
1/4 large bagel
5 whole wheat crackers
7 square or round crackers
1/2 cup cooked oatmeal
1 packet instant oatmeal
3 cups popcorn
1 cup dry cereal
1/2 cup cooked rice or pasta
1 small tortilla 6"

What counts as 1 cup of vegetables?

1 cup raw, cooked, or vegetable juice
2 cups raw leafy greens
12 baby carrots or 2 medium carrots
2 large celery stalks
1 large ear corn
1 large pepper
1 large tomato

What counts as 1 cup of fruit?

1 small apple
1 large banana
1 cup cut fruit
32 grapes
8 large strawberries
2 large plums
1/2 cup dried fruit
1 cup 100% fruit juice

What counts as 1 cup of milk?

1 cup milk
1/2 cup evaporated milk
1 cup yogurt
3 slices processed cheese
2 slices of hard cheese like cheddar or swiss
1/3 cup shredded cheese
2 cups cottage cheese
1 cup pudding, frozen yogurt

What counts as 1 ounce in the meat and beans group?

1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish
1/4 cup cooked beans or peas
1 egg or 2 egg whites
1 TBSP Peanut Butter or Almond Butter
1/4 cup roasted soy beans
1/2 ounce nuts or seeds (12 almonds, 7 walnut halves, 24 pistachios)
2 TBSP hummus
1/4 cup tofu
1 slice of sandwich meat

How do I count the oils I eat?

1 TBSP = 3 tsp
1 TBSP margarine, mayo = 2.5 tsp oil
4 large olives = 1/2 tsp
2TBSP peanut Butter = 4 tsp
1 ounce nut and seeds = 3 tsp

Food Groups

What counts as an ounce equivalent of grains?

In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the Grains Group.

The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce equivalent of grains towards your daily recommended intake. In some cases the number of ounce-equivalents for common portions are also shown.

		Amount that counts as 1 ounce equivalent of grains	Common portions and ounce equivalents
Bagels	WG*: whole wheat RG*: plain, egg	1 "mini" bagel	1 large bagel = 4 ounce equivalents
Biscuits	(baking powder/ buttermilk—RG*)	1 small (2" diameter)	1 large (3" diameter) = 2 ounce equivalents
Breads	WG*: 100% Whole wheat RG*: white, wheat, French, sourdough	1 regular slice 1 small slice French 4 snack-size slices rye bread	2 regular slices = 2 ounce equivalents
Bulgur	cracked wheat (WG*)	½ cup cooked	
Cornbread	(RG*)	1 small piece (2 ½" x 1 ¼" x 1 ¼")	1 medium piece (2 ½" x 2 ½" x 1 ¼") = 2 ounce equivalents
Crackers	WG*: 100% whole wheat, rye	5 whole wheat crackers 2 rye crispbreads	
	RG*: saltines, snack crackers	7 square or round crackers	
English muffins	WG*: whole wheat RG*: plain, raisin	½ muffin	1 muffin = 2 ounce equivalents
Muffins	WG*: whole wheat RG*: bran, corn, plain	1 small (2 ½" diameter)	1 large (3 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce equivalents
Oatmeal	(WG)	½ cup cooked 1 packet instant 1 ounce (1/3 cup) dry (regular or quick)	
Pancakes	WG*: Whole wheat, buckwheat RG*: buttermilk, plain	1 pancake (4 ½" diameter) 2 small pancakes (3" diameter)	3 pancakes (4 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce equivalents
Popcorn	(WG*)	3 cups, popped	1 mini microwave bag or 100-calorie bag, popped = 2 ounce equivalents
Ready-to-eat breakfast cereal	WG*: toasted oat, whole wheat flakes RG*: corn flakes, puffed rice	1 cup flakes or rounds 1 ¼ cup puffed	
Rice	WG*: brown, wild RG*: enriched, white, polished	½ cup cooked 1 ounce dry	1 cup cooked = 2 ounce equivalents
Pasta--spaghetti, macaroni, noodles	WG*: whole wheat RG*: enriched, durum	½ cup cooked 1 ounce dry	1 cup cooked = 2 ounce equivalents

Tortillas	WG*: whole wheat, whole grain corn RG*: Flour, corn	1 small flour tortilla (6" diameter) 1 corn tortilla (6" diameter)	1 large tortilla (12" diameter) = 4 ounce equivalents

*WG = whole grains, RG = refined grains. This is shown when products are available both in whole grain and refined grain forms.

Key Consumer Message: *Make at least half your grains whole grains.*

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Food Groups

What counts as a cup of vegetables?

In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens can be considered as 1 cup from the Vegetable Group. The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 cup of vegetables (in some cases equivalents for ½ cup are also shown) towards your recommended intake:

	Amount that counts as 1 cup of vegetables	Amount that counts as ½ cup of vegetables
Dark Green Vegetables		
Broccoli	1 cup chopped or florets	
	3 spears 5" long raw or cooked	
Greens (collards, mustard greens, turnip greens, kale)	1 cup cooked	
Spinach	1 cup, cooked	
	2 cups raw is equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables	1 cup raw is equivalent to ½ cup of vegetables
Raw leafy greens: Spinach, romaine, watercress, dark green leafy lettuce, endive, escarole	2 cups raw is equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables	1 cup raw is equivalent to ½ cup of vegetables
Red and Orange Vegetables		
Carrots	1 cup, strips, slices, or chopped, raw or cooked	
	2 medium	1 medium carrot
	1 cup baby carrots (about 12)	About 6 baby carrots
Pumpkin	1 cup mashed, cooked	
Red peppers	1 cup chopped, raw, or cooked	1 small pepper
	1 large pepper (3" diameter, 3¾" long)	
Tomatoes	1 large raw whole (3")	1 small raw whole (2¼" diameter)
	1 cup chopped or sliced, raw, canned, or cooked	1 medium canned
Tomato juice	1 cup	½ cup
Sweet potato	1 large baked (2¼" or more diameter)	
	1 cup sliced or mashed, cooked	
Winter squash (acorn, butternut, hubbard)	1 cup cubed, cooked	½ acorn squash, baked = ¾ cup
Beans and Peas		
Dry beans and peas (such as black, garbanzo, kidney, pinto, or soy beans, or black eyed peas or split peas)	1 cup whole or mashed, cooked	
Starchy Vegetables		
Corn, yellow or white	1 cup	

	1 large ear (8" to 9" long)	1 small ear (about 6" long)
Green peas	1 cup	
White potatoes	1 cup diced, mashed	
	1 medium boiled or baked potato (2½" to 3" diameter)	
	French fried: 20 medium to long strips (2½" to 4" long) (Contains added calories from solid fats.)	
	Amount that counts as 1 cup of vegetables	**Amount that counts as ½ cup of vegetables**
Other Vegetables		
Bean sprouts	1 cup cooked	
Cabbage, green	1 cup, chopped or shredded raw or cooked	
Cauliflower	1 cup pieces or florets raw or cooked	
Celery	1 cup, diced or sliced, raw or cooked	
	2 large stalks (11" to 12" long)	1 large stalk (11" to 12" long)
Cucumbers	1 cup raw, sliced or chopped	
Green or wax beans	1 cup cooked	
Green peppers	1 cup chopped, raw or cooked	
	1 large pepper (3" diameter, 3¾" long)	1 small pepper
Lettuce, iceberg or head	2 cups raw, shredded or chopped = equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables	1 cup raw, shredded or chopped = equivalent to ½ cup of vegetables
Mushrooms	1 cup raw or cooked	
Onions	1 cup chopped, raw or cooked	
Summer squash or zucchini	1 cup cooked, sliced or diced	

Key Consumer Message: *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

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Food Groups

What counts as a cup of fruit?

In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the Fruit Group. The following specific amounts count as 1 cup of fruit (in some cases equivalents for ½ cup are also shown) towards your daily recommended intake:

	Amount that counts as 1 cup of fruit	Amount that counts as ½ cup of fruit
Apple	½ large (3.25" diameter)	
	1 small (2.5" diameter)	
	1 cup sliced or chopped, raw or cooked	½ cup sliced or chopped, raw or cooked
Applesauce	1 cup	1 snack container (4 oz)
Banana	1 cup sliced	1 small (less than 6" long)
	1 large (8" to 9" long)	
Cantaloupe	1 cup diced or melon balls	1 medium wedge (1/8 of a med. melon)
Grapes	1 cup whole or cut-up	
	32 seedless grapes	16 seedless grapes
Grapefruit	1 medium (4" diameter)	½ medium (4" diameter)
	1 cup sections	
Mixed fruit (fruit cocktail)	1 cup diced or sliced, raw or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Orange	1 large (3-1/16" diameter)	1 small (2-3/8" diameter)
	1 cup sections	
Orange, mandarin	1 cup canned, drained	
Peach	1 large (2 ¾" diameter)	1 small (2" diameter)
	1 cup sliced or diced, raw, cooked, or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
	2 halves, canned	
Pear	1 medium pear (2.5 per lb)	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
	1 cup sliced or diced, raw, cooked, or canned, drained	
Pineapple	1 cup chunks, sliced or crushed, raw, cooked or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Plum	1 cup sliced raw or cooked	
	3 medium or 2 large plums	1 large plum
Strawberries	About 8 large berries	
	1 cup whole, halved, or sliced, fresh or frozen	½ cup whole, halved, or sliced
Watermelon	1 small wedge (1" thick)	6 melon balls

	1 cup diced or balls	
Dried fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots, etc.)	½ cup dried fruit is equivalent to 1 cup fruit: ½ cup raisins ½ cup prunes ½ cup dried apricots	¼ cup dried fruit is equivalent to ½ cup fruit 1 small box raisins (1.5 oz)
100% fruit juice (orange, apple, grape, grapefruit, etc.)	1 cup	½ cup

Key Consumer Message: *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

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Food Groups

Subjects

- The Basics
  - Food Groups
  - Tips & Resources
  - Print Materials
  - Interactive Tools
- Specific Audiences
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  - Pregnant & Breastfeeding
  - Preschoolers
  - Kids
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What counts as a cup in the Dairy Group?

In general, 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or soymilk (soy beverage), 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese can be considered as 1 cup from the Dairy Group.

The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 cup in the Dairy Group towards your daily recommended intake:

	Amount that counts as a cup in the Dairy Group	Common portions and cup equivalents
Milk *[choose fat-free or low-fat milk]*	1 cup milk 1 half-pint container milk ½ cup evaporated milk	
Yogurt *[choose fat-free or low-fat yogurt]*	1 regular container (8 fluid ounces)	1 small container (6 ounces) = ¾ cup
	1 cup yogurt	1 snack size container (4 ounces) = ½ cup
Cheese *[choose reduced-fat or low-fat cheeses]*	1 ½ ounces hard cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, Parmesan) 1/3 cup shredded cheese	1 slice of hard cheese is equivalent to ½ cup milk
	2 ounces processed cheese (American) ½ cup ricotta cheese	1 slice of processed cheese is equivalent to 1/3 cup milk
	2 cups cottage cheese	½ cup cottage cheese is equivalent to ¼ cup milk
Milk-based desserts *[choose fat-*	1 cup pudding made with milk 1 cup frozen yogurt	

Dairy

- What's in the Dairy Group?
- How much is needed?
- What counts as a cup?
- Health benefits and nutrients
- Tips for making wise choices
- Recipes

Related Topics

- Grains
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Dairy
- Protein Foods
- Oils
- Empty Calories
- Physical Activity

free or low-fat types]		
	1 ½ cups ice cream	1 scoop ice cream is equivalent to 1/3 cup milk
Soymilk (soy beverage)	1 cup calcium-fortified soymilk 1 half-pint container calcium-fortified soymilk	

Key Consumer Message: *Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.*

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Food Groups

What counts as an ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group?

In general, 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, ¼ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the Protein Foods Group.

The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group towards your daily recommended intake:

	Amount that counts as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group	Common portions and ounce equivalents
Meats	1 ounce cooked lean beef	1 small steak (eye of round, filet) = 3½ to 4 ounce equivalents
	1 ounce cooked lean pork or ham	1 small lean hamburger = 2 to 3 ounce equivalents
Poultry	1 ounce cooked chicken or turkey, without skin	1 small chicken breast half = 3 ounce equivalents
	1 sandwich slice of turkey (4 ½ x 2 ½ x 1/8")	½ Cornish game hen = 4 ounce equivalents
Seafood	1 ounce cooked fish or shell fish	1 can of tuna, drained = 3 to 4 ounce equivalents 1 salmon steak = 4 to 6 ounce equivalents 1 small trout = 3 ounce equivalents
Eggs	1 egg	3 egg whites = 2 ounce equivalents 3 egg yolks = 1 ounce equivalent
Nuts and seeds	½ ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves) ½ ounce of seeds (pumpkin, sunflower or squash seeds, hulled, roasted) 1 Tablespoon of peanut butter or almond butter	1 ounce of nuts or seeds = 2 ounce equivalents
Beans and peas	¼ cup of cooked beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or white beans) ¼ cup of cooked peas (such as chickpeas, cowpeas, lentils, or split peas) ¼ cup of baked beans, refried beans	1 cup split pea soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup lentil soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup bean soup = 2 ounce equivalents
	¼ cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu 1 oz. tempeh, cooked ¼ cup roasted soybeans 1 falafel patty (2 ¼", 4 oz) 2 Tablespoons hummus	1 soy or bean burger patty = 2 ounce equivalents

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How do I count the oils I eat?

The chart gives a quick guide to the amount of oils in some common foods:

	Amount of food	Amount of oil	Calories from oil	Total calories
		Teaspoons /grams	Approximate calories	Approximate calories
Oils:				
Vegetable oils (such as canola, corn, cottonseed, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, and sunflower)	1 Tbsp	3 tsp/14 g	120	120
Foods rich in oils:				
Margarine, soft (*trans* fat free)	1 Tbsp	2 ½ tsp/11 g	100	100
Mayonnaise	1 Tbsp	2 ½ tsp/11 g	100	100
Mayonnaise-type salad dressing	1 Tbsp	1 tsp/5 g	45	55
Italian dressing	2 Tbsp	2 tsp/8 g	75	85
Thousand Island dressing	2 Tbsp	2 ½ tsp/11 g	100	120
Olives*, ripe, canned	4 large	½ tsp/ 2 g	15	20
Avocado*	½ med	3 tsp/15 g	130	160
Peanut butter*	2 T	4 tsp/ 16 g	140	190
Peanuts, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/14 g	120	165
Mixed nuts, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/15 g	130	170
Cashews, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/13 g	115	165
Almonds, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/15 g	130	170
Hazelnuts*	1 oz	4 tsp/18 g	160	185
Sunflower seeds*	1 oz	3 tsp/14 g	120	165

*Avocados and olives are part of the Vegetable Group; nuts and seeds are part of the Protein Foods Group. These foods are also high in oils. Soft margarine, mayonnaise, and salad dressings are mainly oil and are not considered to be part of any food group.

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Empty Calories

How many empty calories can I have?

The limit for empty calories is based on estimated calorie needs by age/gender group. Physical activity increases calorie needs, so those who are more physically active need more total calories and have a larger limit for empty calories. The chart gives a general guide.

Age and gender	Estimated calories for those who are not physically active: Total daily calorie needs*	Daily limit for empty calories
Children 2-3 yrs	1000 cals	135**
Children 4-8 yrs	1200-1400 cals	120
Girls 9-13 yrs	1600 cals	120
Boys 9-13 yrs	1800 cals	160
Girls 14-18 yrs	1800 cals	160
Boys 14-18 yrs	2200 cals	265
Females 19-30 yrs	2000 cals	260
Males 19-30 yrs	2400 cals	330
Females 31-50 yrs	1800 cals	160
Males 31-50 yrs	2200 cals	265
Females 51+ yrs	1600 cals	120
Males 51+ yrs	2000 cals	260

* These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days. Those who are more active need more total calories, and have a higher limit for empty calories. To find your personal total calorie needs and empty calories limit, enter your information into "My Daily Food Plan."

** The limit for empty calories is higher for children 2 and 3 years old than it is for some older children, because younger children have lower nutrient needs and smaller recommended intakes from the basic food groups.

Key Consumer Messages:

- *Enjoy your food, but eat less.*
- *Avoid oversized portions.*
- *Drink water instead of sugary drinks.*

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