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Portion Size vs. Serving Size

A portion size is the amount of a single food item offered in the packaging of prepared foods, served at a restaurant, or the amount a person chooses to put on his or her plate during a meal or a snack. People often confuse portion size with serving size, which is a standard unit of measuring foods (a cup or an ounce are good examples) and is the unit of measurement on the nutritional informational panel found on packaged food, or in recommended FDA guidelines.

Portion size vs. serving size can be confusing as a person may view a small bag of chips as one portion, without realizing that the nutritional label on the package (amount of calories, fat, sodium, etc.) is for one serving, while in fact saying there are *two* servings in the bag. So, if you eat the entire bag of chips, you are actually eating twice as many calories, fat, sodium, etc than what is reported on the nutritional panel.

In addition, the oversized bagels and muffins often sold today are actually at least 2 servings, but consumers often eat the whole thing. They do not realize that they have selected a large portion size that was more than 1 serving. As what we view as normal portion sizes have increased over the years, so has our calorie intake. To avoid excess calories, sugar, salt, etc, be sure you check the serving size on the label and adjust your portion appropriately.

