

Sizing Up Food Guide Servings

Materials

- Sizing Up Food Guide Servings poster (available from BC Dairy Foundation)
- Food pictures
- Food samples (e.g. dry cereal, water in jug, dry pasta)
- Measuring cups, bowls, glasses and plates of different size

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity, students will:

1. Become familiar with the Food Guide Servings for each of the four food groups. The poster features life-size photos that make it easy to visualize Food Guide Servings.
2. Learn to estimate the number of Food Guide Servings contained in portions you eat. It is not necessary to refer to the household measurements included on the poster, as it is more important to learn to visualize Food Guide Servings without the use of measuring tools or other aids.
3. Develop problem-solving skills. It is important to have the students answer their own questions to develop estimation skills.

Procedure

- A. Ask students to write everything they ate yesterday before you review the Sizing Up Food Guide Servings poster so that they can draw upon their own experiences throughout the exercise.
- B. Using the poster, discuss the following for each food group.

Vegetables & Fruit

- One medium-size vegetable or fruit, a small bowl of cut-up vegetables or fruit, a large bowl of salad, and a small glass of juice are each examples of 1 Food Guide Serving.
- Note the number of Food Guide Servings recommended per day for Vegetables & Fruit.

Children 9–13	Teens 14–18		Adults 15–50		Adults 50+	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
6	7	8	7–8	8–10	7	7

- We often have helpings of Vegetables & Fruit that count as more than one Food Guide Serving. For example, a large baked potato would count as 2 Food Guide Servings. Have the students think up other examples that would count as 2 Food Guide Servings of Vegetables & Fruit (large banana, whole grapefruit, or small bowl of dried fruit).

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Grain Products

- Common examples of 1 Food Guide Serving from this group are 1 slice of bread or a bowl of cereal.
- Note the number of Food Guide Servings recommended per day for Grain Products.

Children 9–13	Teens 14–18		Adults 15–50		Adults 50+	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
6	6	7	6–7	8	6	7

- We often take helpings of Grain Products that are more than 1 Food Guide Serving. A bowl of rice, a plate of pasta, or a muffin are often 2 or more Food Guide Servings.
- Have the students think of other examples of Grain Products not pictured in the poster and encourage them to figure out how many Food Guide Servings their examples would be. Be prepared to turn the questions back to the students so they can practice problem solving.

For example Student: I had a tortilla, how many Food Guide Servings is that?

Teacher: Compare the tortilla to the slice of bread. How does it compare? How many Food Guide Servings do you think it would be? (Only the person who saw it would know.)

The process of having the students do their own problem solving relates to both the second and third learning objectives.

Milk & Alternatives

- Common examples of 1 Food Guide Serving include a glass of milk, a few slices from a block of cheese, or a small container of yogurt. Compare the size of 1 Food Guide Serving of milk to 1 Food Guide Serving of juice. Notice the difference?
- Note the number of Food Guide Servings recommended per day for Milk & Alternatives.

Children 9–13	Teens 14–18		Adults 15–50		Adults 50+	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
3–4	3–4	3–4	2	2	3	3

- We often eat portions that are only ½ Food Guide Serving in this food group.

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Meat & Alternatives

- A Food Guide Serving of this food group takes many forms. A medium-size bowl of beans, medium-size hamburger patty, 2 eggs or a large spoonful of peanut butter are all examples of one serving.
- Girls need 1 Food Guide Serving per day, while boys need 2.

Children 9–13		Teens 14–18		Adults 15–50		Adults 50+	
Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
1	2	2	3	2	3	2	3

C. Apply estimation skills to your own food intake

Once you have completed discussing examples of Food Guide Servings using the poster, have students apply the skills learned to practice estimating how much they ate yesterday. Common stumbling blocks are combination foods, which are classified into more than one food group. Practice estimating figuring out Food Guide Servings of these foods using examples provided by the students (pizza, beef stroganoff, hamburger, soup).

D. Building estimation skills

1. The student pours the amount of cereal he or she would usually eat into different shaped bowls. The student then practices comparing the amounts poured with the poster. Further experience can involve measuring the cereal poured and comparing the actual measure to the estimated amount.
2. The student pours milk or juice into a variety of glasses, then estimates the number of Food Guide Servings and verifies the estimation by using a measuring cup.
3. Using a block of cheese, the student slices off cheese until he or she feels that it looks like one Food Guide Serving. Verify the estimation by weighing the cheese slices and comparing to the serving size poster (50 g = 1 Food Guide Serving).

A word about group size

When using 1 poster, it is best to limit the group to ten. More than one poster is recommended for larger groups to allow the students to interact with the poster. Actual size foods are more meaningful when seen at the distance that you would normally view the food on your plate. When teaching a large group with one poster, walk around the room and carry the poster for students to view closely and to compare with their own food experiences.