

## PORTION DISTORTION

### FOCUS AREA

Food & Drink Choice



### KEY MESSAGES

- People have different nutritional and food needs as they grow and develop.

### LEARNING AREA

- Health and Physical Education
- Design Technologies – Food specialisations

### YEAR

7, 8, 9  
or 10

### TYPE

Hands-on class activity, discussion, and Kahoots Quiz

### Introduction

This Quick Bite aims for students to explore the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and to identify the recommended number and size of serves of a range of food items.

### Learning Intention

This resource will enable students to:

- identify serve sizes of various food items.
- identify recommended number of serves for different age groups.
- create informative resources to promote serving sizes.

### Materials and equipment

- [Healthy Eating for Children](#) Brochure
- [Australian Guide to Healthy Eating](#) Poster
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating](#)
- [Portion Distortion](#) Kahoot
- Video [What is a Serve?](#)
- Various common food items for students to weigh out and compare portion vs serve size.
- Kitchen scales

### Teacher background notes

#### Additional reading:

- [Healthy Eating for Children](#)
- [Australian Guide to Healthy Eating](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating](#)

#### Tips for teaching serving sizes:

- Introduce the Australian Dietary Guidelines and their purpose of providing up-to-date advice about the amount and type of foods we need to eat for health and wellbeing. The recommendations are based on scientific evidence, developed after reviewing at quality research.
- Display the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and explain this model is a visual representation of the Guidelines and the serves of the five food groups recommended for consumption each day.
- Provide students with the opportunity to learn about the serve sizes of discretionary foods as well as food from the five food groups. Teachers must encourage consumption of the recommended five food groups but also acknowledge that discretionary foods can be eaten occasionally and in appropriate serve sizes.
- Serve sizes of discretionary foods can be harder to interpret as a serve size is often mistaken for the serving size printed on the packaging (see below for definitions). Refer to the Eat for Health website for further information on serve sizes of discretionary foods <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/discretionary-food-and-drink-choices>.

## To complete this activity

- Explain the difference between serve size, serving size and portion size.
  - **Serve size** is a set amount of food defined by the Australia Guide to Healthy Eating. Within each food group the 'serve size' of different foods have roughly the same amount of key nutrients and kilojoules. 'Serves' are used as the standard measure of the amount of food groups recommended in a healthy diet.
  - **Serving size** is the amount specified on the Nutrition Information Panel of packaged foods. It is defined by the manufacturer and may not be the same as a 'serve size'.
  - **Portion size** is the amount of a food you choose to eat — which may be more or less than a 'serve'.
- The video [What is a Serve?](#) Explains the differences between serve size, serving size and portion size.
- Provide a hands-on experience for students to 'plate up' a portion of various food items that they would commonly eat, eg breakfast cereals, snacks, pasta, vegetables. Weigh the portion size, then use the [Healthy Eating for Children](#) to 'plate up' a recommended 'serve' size and a 'serving' of packaged food e.g., cereal. This provides a good visual representation for students to compare 'serve', 'serving' and 'portion' sizes to. Discuss the findings as a class.
- Use the [Portion Distortion](#) Kahoots Quiz to either introduce this topic or reinforce students understanding of 'serve', 'serving', and 'portion' sizes after the hands-on activity.

**Additional Activity** – Students produce a poster to visually represent appropriate number and sizes of 'serves' of various foods. These could be displayed in the classroom or link in with the school canteen to promote healthy food choices in the canteen.

**For example:**

**What is a serve of vegetables\*?**

A standard serve is about 75g (100–350kJ) or:

- ½ cup cooked green or orange vegetables (for example, broccoli, spinach, carrots or pumpkin)
- ½ cup cooked dried or canned beans, peas or lentils
- 1 cup green leafy or raw salad vegetables
- ½ cup sweet corn
- ½ medium potato or other starchy vegetables (sweet potato, taro or cassava)
- 1 medium tomato

The infographic includes images of a bag of frozen vegetables (½ cup), two carrots (½ cup), a sweet potato (½ medium), a plate of green leafy vegetables (1 cup), a tomato (½ cup), and a beetroot (½ cup).

*\*With canned varieties, choose those with no added salt*

Source: National Health and Medical Research Council

## Acknowledgements

National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for Health (21 February 2020), *Guidelines*, available at <<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>>, accessed on 17 February 2022  
Australian Government, Federal Register of Legislation (n.d) Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code – Standard 1.2.8 – Nutrition information requirements, available at <<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021C00668>>, accessed on 5 April 2022



Department of  
Health

