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Serving Sizes

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Glasses, dishes, bowls, servings, spoonfuls, pieces, and portions are food size descriptions which have many meanings. They may have meaning to a specific family but they may be interpreted in different ways by others. A spoonful could represent a measuring spoon, a dessert or fruit spoon, or one of many possible vegetable serving spoons. Similarly, a bowlful could be a dessert dish, a soup dish, or a vegetable dish. Even these come in many different sizes.

Knowing the amounts in a serving is necessary for planning or evaluating meals for nutritional adequacy and for buying appropriate amounts. Food groups and their serving sizes are based on nutrient contributions. Currently, there is much interest in serving sizes in order to count calories.

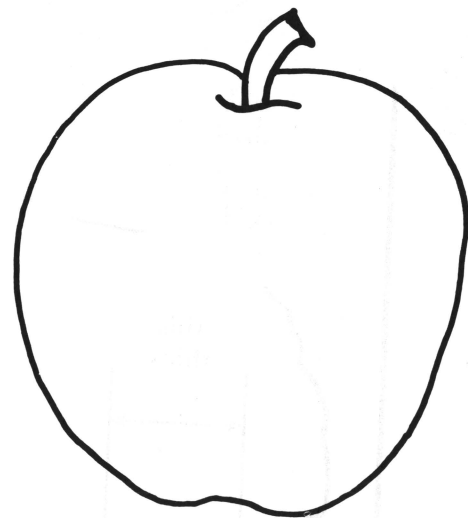
Home economists describe servings of food according to **FOOD FOR FITNESS-A DAILY FOOD GUIDE**, also called the Basic Four (Consult University of Missouri Extension Folder 164). Milk is listed by cups, meat foods by ounces, vegetables and fruits by half cups or medium size raw, breads as slices, and cereals by ounce of ready-to-eat cereal or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cooked cereal, cornmeal, grits, rice, or pastas.

Dietitians use a similar method, the **FOOD EXCHANGE LIST**, for planning special diets controlling protein, fat, carbohydrate, and/or calories. The greatest variation in servings for diets based on exchange lists in servings of fruit are based on 40 calorie portions instead of consistently being $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

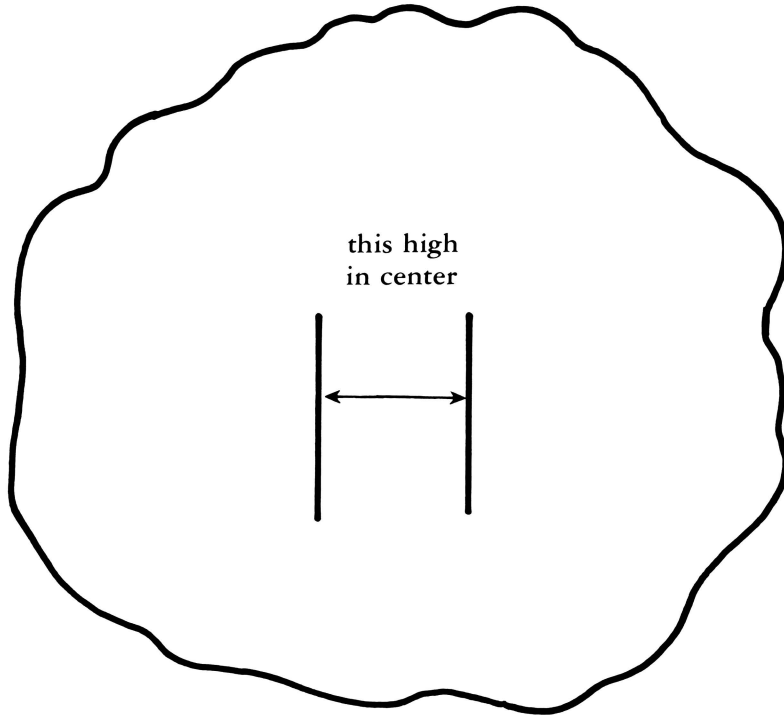
No matter what system is used, specific descriptions are important in order to use information in food tables accurately. A small difference in reporting serving sizes can easily double or triple mistakes. For example, a 3-inch cookie contains twice as many nutrients as a 2-inch cookie. Beverages can be purchased in containers ranging from 4 ounces to 16 ounces or more. Raw fruits and vegetables that are round can be listed as small meaning about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches or large indicating about 5 inches in diameter: but a small banana is about 6 inches long

whereas a large banana is 10 inches or more. Drive-ins offer hamburgers that usually weigh 1 ounce or are sold as quarter pounders which are about 3 ounces of cooked meat. And bread comes in thin slices, or thick slices like Texas Toast. Interpretation and reporting of these sizes can make quite a difference in nutrient content estimations.

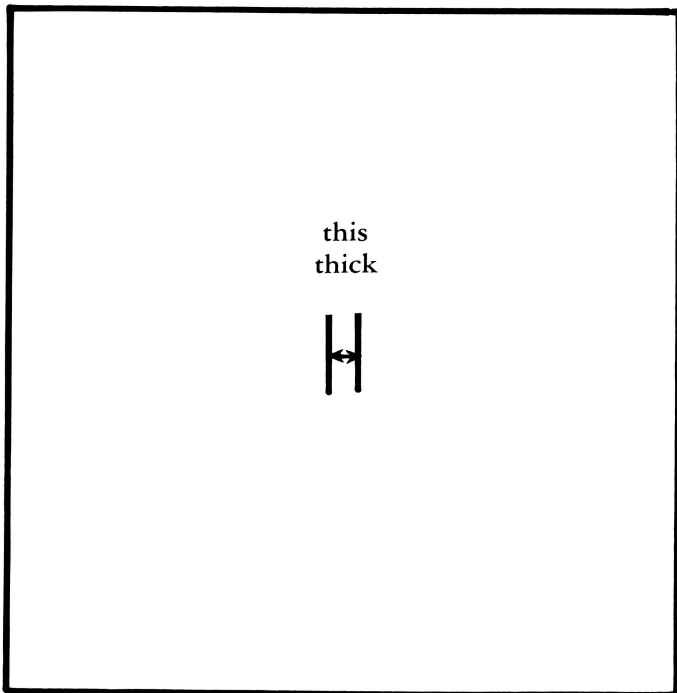
The following illustrations are provided to help picture serving sizes. Rulers, standardized household measures, and scales to weigh food will serve as a double check for controlling serving sizes. Weighing food is the best way to determine portion sizes. Individuals who are responsible for estimating portions should weigh foods periodically to check the accuracy of estimating portion sizes.



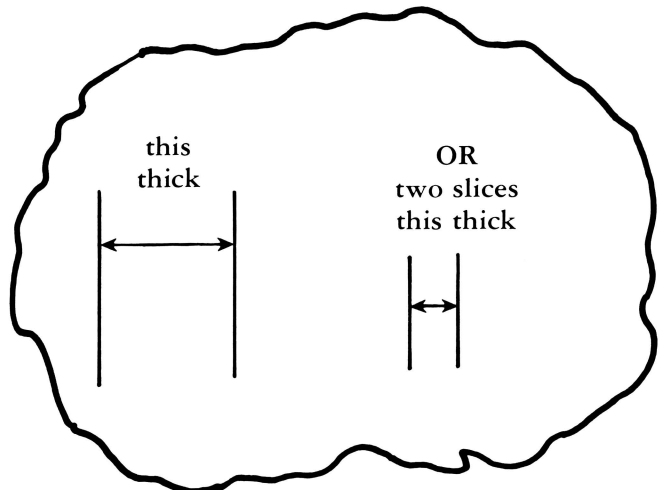
small fruit
(apple, peach, tomato, etc)



½ cup vegetable or fruit

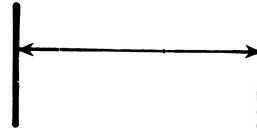
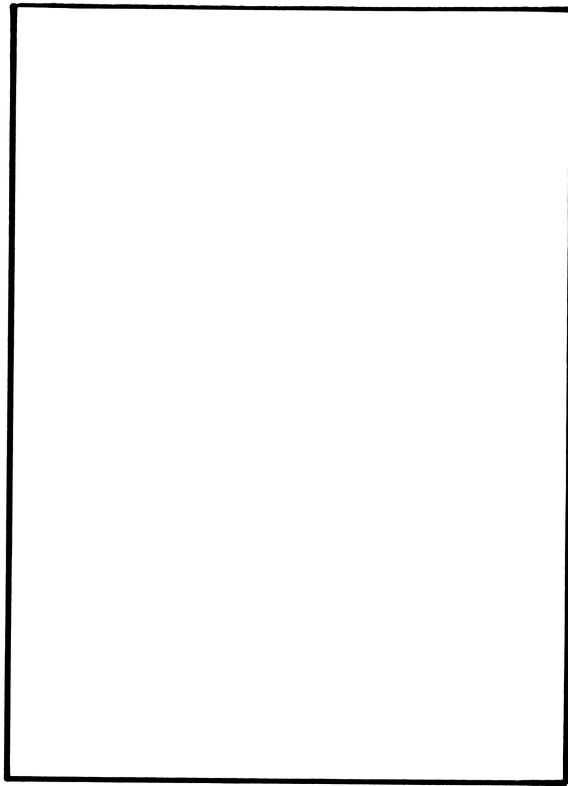


1 ounce cheese or luncheon meat

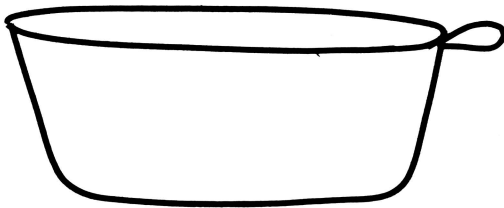
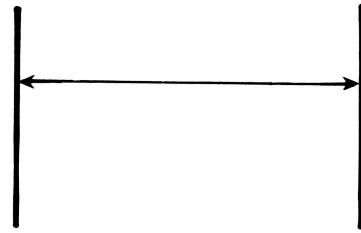


3 ounces meat, fish, poultry

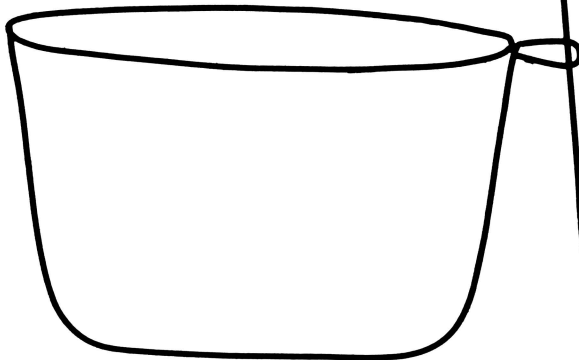
Cereal - Read the label for number of ounces.



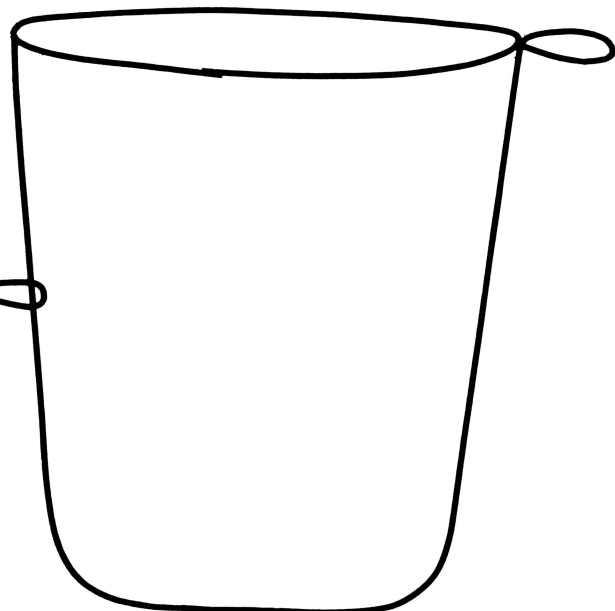
Width varies depending
on size of cereal.



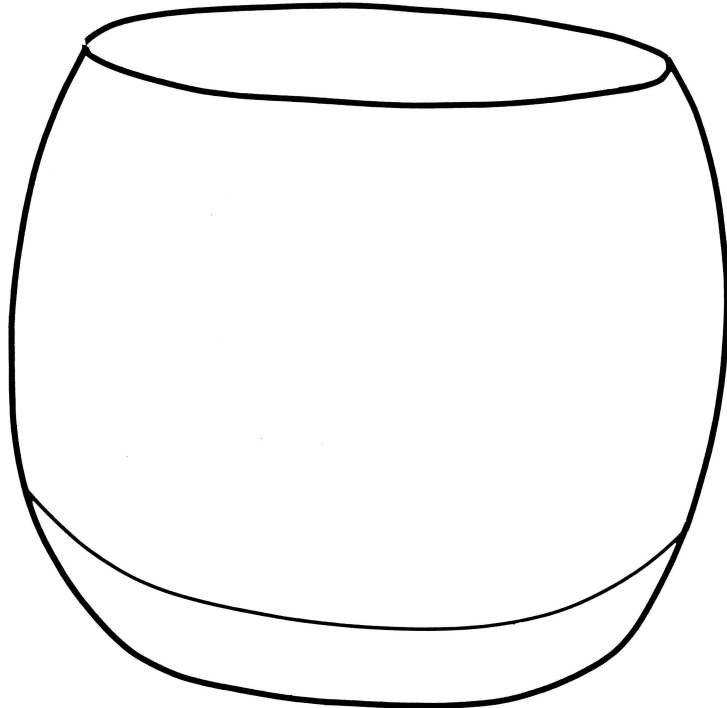
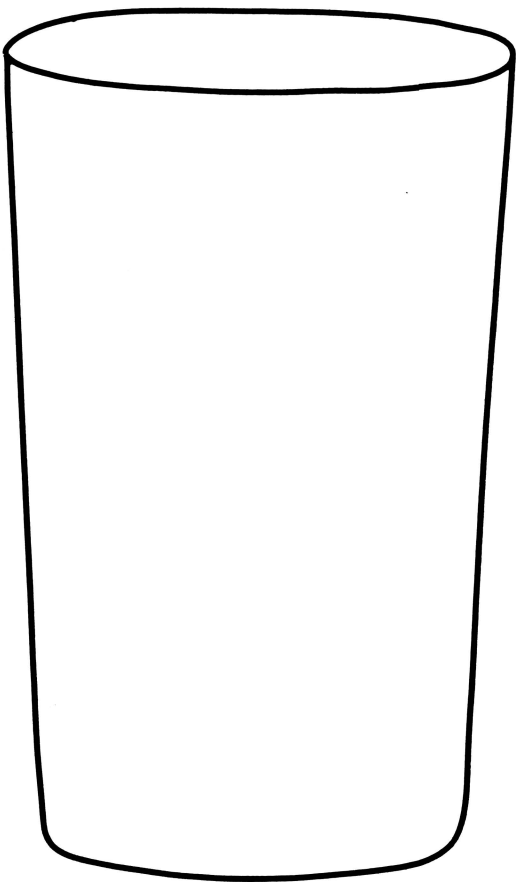
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
(2 fluid ounces)



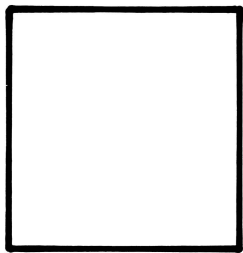
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
(4 fluid ounces)



1 cup
(8 fluid ounces)



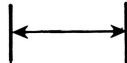
8 ounce glasses



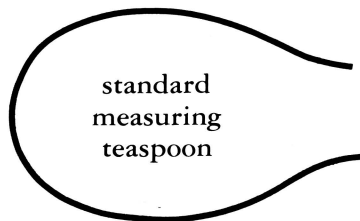
1 teaspoon
this thick



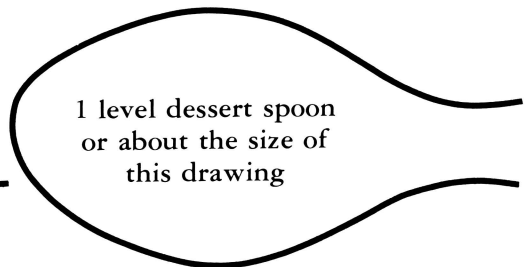
1 tablespoon
is this thick



1 teaspoon

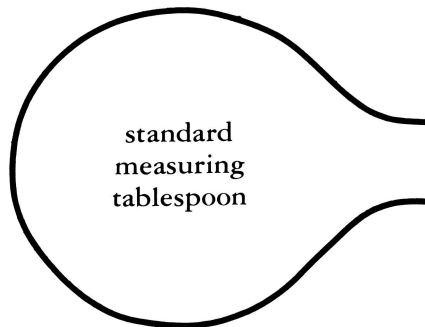


standard
measuring
teaspoon

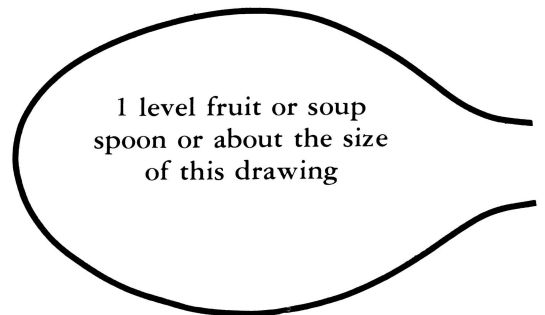


1 level dessert spoon
or about the size of
this drawing

1 Tablespoon



standard
measuring
tablespoon



1 level fruit or soup
spoon or about the size
of this drawing

4 Tbsp. = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
 $5\frac{1}{3}$ Tbsp. = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup

| | |
|-------|---|
| 1 cup | 16 Tbsp. 8 fluid oz. $\frac{1}{2}$ pint |
|-------|---|

| | |
|--------|--|
| 2 cups | 16 fluid oz. 1 pint $\frac{1}{2}$ quart 1 pound |
|--------|--|

4 cups = 2 pints = 1 quart
16 cups = 4 quarts = 1 gallon

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