

Knowing 'how much' food to give young children can be difficult to judge. Young Children only have small tummies so it can be rather easy to over feed them. Based on our own experiences and general confusions about this we thought it would be useful to share a 'quick glance' portion guide. This can be used by parents and those looking after children aged 1 to 4 years.



FRUIT & VEG (5 portions/day)	Portion Range
Apple	1/4 to 1/2 medium Apple
Avocado	1/2 to 2 tablespoons flesh
Banana	1/4 to 1 medium Banana
Berries (blackberries, blueberries, strawberries & raspberries)	3 to 10 berries
Broccoli/cauliflower	1 to 4 florets
Brussel sprouts	1/2 to 3 sprouts
Cabbage	1 to 3 tablespoons
Carrot	2 to 6 carrot sticks
Celery, cucumber, radishes and other salad vegetables	2 to 8 sticks/ slices
Cherry tomatoes	1 to 4
Clementine/tangerine/mandarin	1/4 to 1 Fruit
Dried raisins, sultanas	1/2 to 2 tablespoons
Dried apricots/prunes	1 to 4 pieces
Fruit salad	1/2 to 1 small bowl
Grapes	3 to 10 sliced grapes
Green beans/leek/onion/shallots	1/2 to 2 tablespoons
Homemade vegetable soup	1/2 to 1 small bowl (60 to 125 mls)
Kiwi, plums, apricot	1/2 to 1 Fruit
Mange tout	2 to 8
Mango	1/4 to 1/2
Mushrooms	1 to 4 button mushrooms
Olives	1 to 5
Orange	1/4 to 1/2 Orange
Peaches, Nectarines	1/4 to 1 Fruit
Pear, Spinach, Stir Fry Vegetables, Swede/ Turnip, Sweetcorn	1/2 to 2 tablespoons
Stewed fruit/ fruit puree	2 to 4 tablespoons

**STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES  
(4 portions/day)****Portion Range**

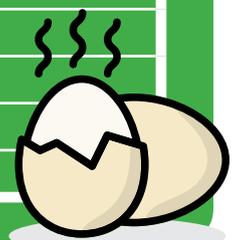
Bagel	¼ to ½ bagel
Bread slice	½ to 1 medium slice
Breakfast Cereals	3 to 6 tablespoons
Chips	4 to 8 chips
Couscous	2 to 4 tablespoons
Crumpet	¼ to 1 crumpet
Dry porridge/Ready Brek	2 to 4 tablespoons
Malt loaf	½ to 1 slice
Mashed potato	1-4 tablespoons
Muesli	2 to 4 tablespoons
Oatcakes	1-2 oatcakes
Pasta (cooked)	2 to 5 tablespoons
Potato wedges	2 to 4 medium
Rice (boiled)	2 to 5 tablespoons
Roast potatoes	½ to 1 small potato
Scone	½ to 1 scone

**DAIRY (3 portions/day)****Portion Range**

Cow's milk, soya milk & alternative milks.	100 to 120 mls
Custard	5 to 7 tablespoons
Fromage frais	2 small pots
Grated cheese	2 to 4 tablespoons
Rice pudding	2 to 5 tablespoons
Tzatziki/other yoghurt dip	1 to 3 tablespoons
Yoghurt	1 pot (125mls)
Cheese triangles/Babybel	½ string or 1 slice/small triangle/ mini/Babybel

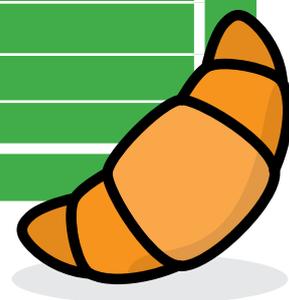
**PROTEIN (2 portions/day)****Portion Range**

Bacon	¼ to 1 rasher
Baked beans	2 to 4 tablespoons
Beef	½ to 1 slice
Beef/lamb burger	¼ to 1 small burger
Chick peas/hummus	1 to 2 tablespoons
Chicken drumstick	½ to 1 drumstick
Chicken nuggets	2 to 4
Egg - poached, boiled or fried	½ to 1
Fish cakes	½ to 1



<b>PROTEIN Continued.. (2 Portions/day)</b>	<b>Portion Range</b>
Fish fingers	1 to 2
Ham	½ to 1 ½ small slices
Meatballs in tomato sauce	1 to 3 meatballs
Minced meat (cooked)	2 to 5 tablespoons
Sausage - cocktail	1 to 3
Sausage - large	¼ to 1
Scrambled egg	2 to 4 tablespoons
Shell fish, prawns, muscles	½ to 2 tablespoons
Tofu	2 to 4 tablespoons
White/Oily fresh fish	¼ to 1 small fillet

<b>NOW &amp; AGAIN.</b>	<b>Portion Range</b>
Bar of chocolate	2 to 4 squares
Boiled sweets	1 to 2
Chocolate buttons	6 to 8
Chocolate spread	1 teaspoon
Crisps/Puffs/Hoops	4 to 6
Croissant	½ to 1 plain
Digestive/sandwich biscuit	½ to 1 biscuit
Doughnut	¼ or ¾ of a 60g doughnut
Fruit cake	½ to 1 slice
Ice cream	2 to 3 tablespoons
Jelly	2 to 4 tablespoons



**Source: Adapted from: Action for Children (2017)<sup>1</sup>; More et al. (2015)<sup>2</sup>**

## Conclusions

These portion size guides are approximate portion ranges that are appropriate for children aged 1 to 4 years. Younger children will eat a bit less (so the lower figure ranges) and older children a bit more (so the higher figure ranges). Very active children may also eat a bit more, so the higher figure ranges again are probably more realistic for them. Use the above to help guide you on how much to offer and keep an eye on those all-important portions.

## Please note

This fact sheet has been based on scientific evidence available at the time that it was written. The information contained in this commentary is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. We recommend consultation with your doctor or health care professional if you have any concerns around your child's health.

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**Further Information: [www.littlefoodie.org](http://www.littlefoodie.org)**

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## References

1. Adapted from: Action for Children (2017) Eat Better Start Better: A Practical Guide. pp15.
2. More JA & Emmett PM (2015) Evidenced-based, practical food portion sizes for preschool children and how they fit into a well-balanced, nutritionally adequate diet. J Hum Nutr Diet. 28(2):135-54.

