PORTION SIZES
WHEN YOU CAN’T MEASURE YOUR FOOD

Your Helpful Hands...
The best way to find out how much of a food you are eating, or your portion size, is to use measuring cups, spoons or a scale. Sometimes, such as when you eat out, you can’t do this. Here are a number of ways you can use your hands to help you find out about how much you are eating.* The portion sizes in each food group use an adult woman’s hand as a guide.

One fist clenched = 8 fluid ounces
• Cold and hot beverages

Two hands, cupped = 1 cup
• Breakfast cereal
• Soup
• Green salads (lettuce or spinach)
• Mixed dishes (chili, stew, macaroni and cheese)
• Chinese food

One hand, cupped = 1/2 cup
• Pasta, rice
• Hot cereal (oatmeal, farina)
• Fruit salad, berries, applesauce
• Tomato or spaghetti sauce
• Beans (cooked or canned)
• Cole slaw or potato salad
• Mashed potatoes
• Cottage cheese
• Pudding, gelatin

Palm of hand = 3 ounces
• Cooked meats (hamburger patty, chicken breast, fish fillet, pork loin)
• Canned fish (tuna, salmon)

Two thumbs together = 1 tablespoon
• Peanut butter
• Salad dressing
• Sour cream
• Dips
• Whipped topping
• Dessert sauces
• Margarine
• Cream cheese
• Mayonnaise

*Adapted from MyPyramid.gov. This handout is only a guide. The amounts of foods in your meal plan may be different.

Provided as an educational service on www.learningaboutdiabetes.org. This handout is not for use by organizations or healthcare professionals. © 2008 Learning About Diabetes, Inc. All rights reserved. Rev 2018