

How big is your banana?

Fruit is one of the most popular, nutritious snacks available. Bursting with flavour and full of vitamins, minerals and fibre, fruit provides a great source of energy between meals. Right now I am eyeing off the fruit bowl and I see banana on top. The curved yellow gift from nature gleams up at me like a cheesy smile. *But which one should I choose?* Some are bigger than others. The question then lingers on my mind - *how big should my banana be?*

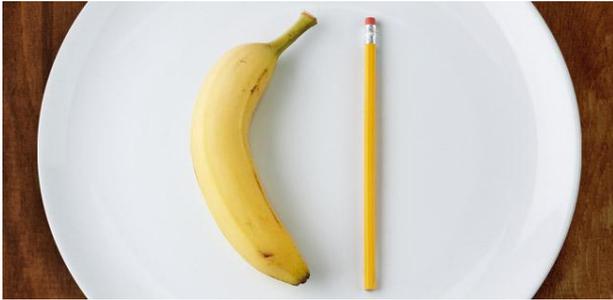


Image from The Guardian.com

The table below outlines the 5 core food groups according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines: vegetables, fruit, grain/cereal, meats/alternatives and dairy products (1).

Recommended average daily number of serves from each of the five food groups*						Additional serves for taller or more active men and women
	Vegetables & legumes/beans	Fruit	Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain	Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans	Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives (mostly reduced fat)	Approx. n.o. of additional serves from the 5 food groups or discretionary choices
Men						
19-50	6	2	6	3	2 ½	0-3
51-70	5 ½	2	6	2 ½	2 ½	0-2 ½
70+	5	2	4 ½	2 ½	3 ½	0-2 ½
Women						
19-50	5	2	6	2 ½	2 ½	0-2 ½
51-70	5	2	4	2	4	0-2 ½
70+	5	2	3	2	4	0-2
Pregnant	5	2	8 ½	3 ½	2 ½	0-2 ½
Lactating	7 ½	2	9	2 ½	2 ½	0-2 ½

The guidelines recommend two serves of fruit per day to get a range of health benefits. **But what is a serve of fruit?** **How big should my banana be?** According to the “Go for 2 and 5 “campaign (2), a serve of fruit should be approximately 150gr.



So how big is 150gr? A simple tip to determine the approximate size of a banana is to stretch your thumb and pinkie finger. If your banana is bigger than that, it is larger than 1 serve. Or if you have a pencil handy, the length of the average pencil will give you the right size.

So what about other fruit?

- **Apple (1serve =150gr):** Or about the size of a baseball. Or if you aren't a baseballer, clench your fist and you have about the right size.
- **Fruit salad (1 serve = ½ cup):** a serve is the amount that would fit in a computer mouse.
- **Raisons/dried fruit (1 serve=1/4 cup):** or about the same size as an medium sized egg.



Image from AGHE – serving sizes

Why is it important that we monitor the size of our fruit?

Although fruit is an important part of a healthy, balanced diet, if you eat 2 very large pieces of fruit, you might be eating more than 2 serves. **And what does that matter?** Too much fruit can result in too many calories and the excess sugar can increase the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

So when you go to the fruit bowl for a snack, remember, for a healthier you, *size does matter*.

References:

1. <http://eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/five-food-groups>
2. <http://www.gofor2and5.com.au/WhatisaServe/tabid/56/Default.aspx>