FICCI CONSUMER GUIDE ON
SERVE SIZE AND PORTION CONTROL



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Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

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Jyoti Vij
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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present the 'FICCI Consumer Guide on Serve Size and Portion Control', an important step in our collective journey towards promoting healthier dietary habits, informed food choices, and responsible consumption across India.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on understanding food consumption patterns to ensure that convenience and health go hand in hand. Striking this balance is essential in today's fast-paced lifestyle, where quick food choices must also align with long-term well-being. This makes nutritional awareness not just important, but the need of the hour. These guidelines aim to provide a practical reference for consumers to enable them in making informed and responsible food decisions. The guide will provide consumers with relevant serve size and portion control strategies that they can easily adopt in their daily lifestyle. Further, the guidelines will also seek to simplify nutrition labels, helping consumers to better understand the real nutrient content in the portions or 'per serve' of the food they actually eat.

As an industry-led and policy-driven organization, FICCI is deeply committed to supporting initiatives that balance public health priorities with business growth and innovation. These guidelines are a reflection of our commitment to encourage consumer education, label literacy and mindful consumption.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our industry members, domain experts, and stakeholders whose invaluable insights, and continued support have made this resource possible. I hope these guidelines will serve as a useful tool in achieving the vision of a balanced and sustainable food ecosystem.

Jyoti Vij
Director General
FICCI

Confederation of Indian Food Trade & Industry
(Food Wing of FICCI)



FOREWORD

In the era of rapid urbanization, evolving dietary patterns, and a fast-paced lifestyle, the role of processed foods in our daily consumption has become increasingly prominent. As food systems advance, so must our approach towards empowering consumers with the right knowledge and tools to make informed, health-conscious decisions. This is where science-based guidance becomes not just relevant, but essential.

As we witness a paradigm shift in consumer behaviour, it is our collective responsibility to address the rising demand for ready-to-eat meals, convenient foods through online delivery platforms, and pre-packaged foods in the market. One of the most critical, yet often overlooked, aspects of nutrition literacy is the understanding of serve size and portion control. These elements are vital to maintaining dietary balance, especially in context where overconsumption is a growing concern. Thus, informed eating begins with awareness on serve size and controlling portions, as they play a key role in maintaining a healthy and balanced diet.

At CIFTI-FICCI, we are committed in advancing consumer education and make them aware of food regulatory framework. The 'FICCI Consumer Guide on Serve Size and Portion Control' is a step in this direction, designed to help consumers navigate nutritional information more effectively and empower them to make informed food choices. By clarifying the importance of serve size and nutritional information, the document will inform readers of the intent behind specifying serve size on the packaged food and menu labels.

Further, the guidelines will aim to improve label literacy by demystifying the often-confusing presentation of 'per 100g' versus 'per serve' values to enable consumers understand the actual nutrient intake from the food consumed. Through illustrative examples of food labels, menu labelling, and digital display of nutrition information, this document will walk consumers through real-life label formats, helping them decode how serve size is presented.

As we present this initiative in alignment with FSSAI's ongoing commitment to public health, we hope it will serve as a valuable tool in promoting balanced eating habits among consumers. I sincerely hope that this guide will foster greater awareness, promote a culture of responsible consumption, and ultimately, contribute to a healthier and more informed India. This guide aspires to be a practical and relatable resource for every consumer.

Let us continue working together towards a future where convenience and health go hand in hand, and where every food choice is a step towards better well-being.

Mr. Tarun Arora
President
CIFTI- FICCI



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Purpose of the Guidelines

Over the past few years, consumers have been exposed to a global trend of increasing portion sizes, which has contributed to a growing risk of various health related issues. Portion size plays an important role in maintaining a healthy, balanced and sustainable lifestyle for individuals. Recognizing this, there has been a growing public health interest in reducing or limiting portion size. Therefore, this brings us with an opportunity to identify strategies that can support consumers in regulating their diet and food portions. One such strategy is consumer education. It is important to be aware of one's food choices, especially at the time where consumers opt for a mix of taste and convenience.

When it comes to pre-packaged foods, consumers are often exposed to a large amount of information on their food packages and are left confused to emphasize on the details more important for their nutritional intake. The Nutritional Information Panel on the food labels provide the necessary information on nutrient intake for the consumers. However, the consumers are often puzzled between '100gm' and 'per serve' nutritional content that the food provides. While FSSAI mandates the nutritional information 'per 100gm' or 'per 100ml' or 'per single consumption pack' to be mentioned on the label along with the 'per serve percentage (%) contribution to Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)' of the product, the importance of serve size and portion control cannot be overlooked.

Therefore, the FICCI Guidance on Serve Size and Portion Control is specifically designed for consumers enabling them to make informed food choices. The guidelines attempt to clarify the concepts of 'serve size' and 'portion control' to make consumers aware of the regulatory mandate and efforts made by FSSAI to educate them. These guidelines also provide consumers with an experience of learning through illustrious examples of food labels, menu labelling and digital information to be displayed.

Introduction

Since prehistoric times, food processing has been a key aspect of the food production chain, bridging the gap between agricultural output and the availability of food to consumers in the desired form and at the right time. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize on the importance of food processing as it ensures food safety, increased shelf life, optimal nutrient availability, food quality, and food waste reduction. It also forms an important sector for overall food security of the country. While it seems more convenient in terms of saving food preparation time, lifestyle changes of the consumer have also greatly contributed to this drastic shift in food industry. Such exposures to a variety of food products can happen anywhere, including outdoor dining, online delivery platforms or even pre-packaged foods available in the market.

Therefore, in context of processed foods, there is an urgent need to sensitize consumers regarding serve size and portion control. The FICCI Guidelines for Consumers of Processed Foods (released in 2024) was an attempt to ease the understanding of processed foods backed by science-based information to consumers. The guidelines provide clear and relevant insights on processed food, food labels, significance of essential nutrients, and ways and means to pursue a right diet regime while maintaining balance between health, well-being and occasional treats.

In light of changing dietary habits, guidance on nutritional information including serve size or portion size is of paramount importance. Globally, regulatory bodies consider nutrition labelling as a policy tool to empower consumers with the right information. While the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights nutrition labelling focussed on ingredient lists, nutrient declarations, supplementary nutrition information (including front-of-pack labels) and nutrition and health claims serving different purposes, the US Food and Drug Administration emphasizes on starting with serving information when reading nutrition facts on food labels.

In India, nutrition labelling is one such step in line with the continued commitment of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to ensure public health. It provides information access and encourage consumers to make informed food

choices. **FSSAI defines "serving or serve size" as an amount of food customarily consumed per eating occasion or as defined on the label which is expressed in metric unit.** Additionally, it may also be given in common household measures like teaspoon, tablespoon, cup that is appropriate to the food for the ease of consumer understanding and applicability at individual level.

Why Serve Size?

It is important to take into consideration the quantity at which each food is eaten at a given occasion and their nutritional needs.

Increased incidence of overconsumption may lead to health concerns; therefore it is important to emphasize on serving size.

Understanding Serving Information

Most commonly, consumers may find terms like Nutritional Information per 100g or 100ml or per single consumption pack of the product and per serve percentage (%) contribution to Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)* to be displayed on the food package. However, it is important to note that nutrition information on 'per serve' basis is voluntary, and food companies may voluntarily choose to provide this along with the mandatory information.

Consumers may refer to the below mentioned pictorial representation of nutrition information.

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Number of servings per pack = 20	Serving size = 10g	
	per 100g	% RDA per serve
Energy (kcal)	483.2	2
Carbohydrate (g)	58.4	-
Total Sugars (g)	3.3	-
Added sugars (g)	0	0
Total fat (g)	21.3	3
Saturated fat (g)	2.1	1
Trans fat (g)	0	0
Cholesterol (mg)	0	0
Sodium (mg)	512.6	3
Protein (g)	14.5	3

NUTRITION INFORMATION			
Number of servings per pack = 20		Serving size = 10g	
	per 100g	per serve	% RDA per serve
Energy (kcal)	483.2	48.32	2
Carbohydrate (g)	58.4	5.84	-
Total Sugars (g)	3.3	0.33	-
Added sugars (g)	0	0	0
Total fat (g)	21.3	2.13	3
Saturated fat (g)	2.1	0.21	1
Trans fat (g)	0	0	0
Cholesterol (mg)	0	0	0
Sodium (mg)	512.6	51.26	3
Protein (g)	14.5	1.45	3

- Look out for Nutrition Information (NI) Table to identify the number of servings, serve size and percent contribution of nutrient per serve on a food pack.
- The consumers may find one or more number of servings in a food package.
- The serve size is usually determined by the manufacturer based on customary consumption of a food product.

**Recommended dietary allowances (RDA)" means the average daily dietary nutrient intake level sufficient to meet the nutrient requirement of nearly all (97 to 98 per cent.) healthy individuals in a particular life stage and gender group.*

Serve Size and Nutrition Information

In addition to the percentage (%) contribution to RDA per serve, FSSAI also mandates 'serving or serve size' and 'number of servings' to be mentioned on a food package. This enables consumers to understand the amount of nutrients that they get per serve consumption of the food item.

While such declarations are mandatory by FSSAI, the regulations also specify certain food product categories that are exempted from this mandatory requirement based on different criteria. For a detailed list of such exemptions, consumers may refer to the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020 provided on FSSAI website. (https://www.fssai.gov.in/cms/food-safety-and-standards-regulations.php)

Let us understand serve size with the help of food product examples:

ILLUSTRATION OF A BISCUIT MULTIPACK



NUTRITION INFORMATION

Serving size (3 Bis) 25g (approx.) Servings/Pack : about 40
Biscuits/Pack : 120

Parameter	Approx. Per 100g	Per Serve	%age DV*
Energy	489 kcal	122 kcal	
Protein	7.3g	2g	
Carbohydrates	67.1g	17g	6%
Total Sugars	17.0g	4g	
Added Sugars	16.6g	4g	8%
Total Fat	21.2g	5g	8%
Saturated Fat	10.7g	3g	12%
Mono Unsaturated Fat	8.4g	2g	
Poly Unsaturated Fat	2.2g	less than 1g	
Trans Fat	0g	0g	0%
Cholesterol	0mg	0mg	0%
Sodium	483mg	121mg	6%
Dietary Fibre	6.1g	2g	5%

*Percent Daily Values are based on 2000 calories diet.

The above picture represents a multi-pack of biscuits for consumers. The label can be decoded as:

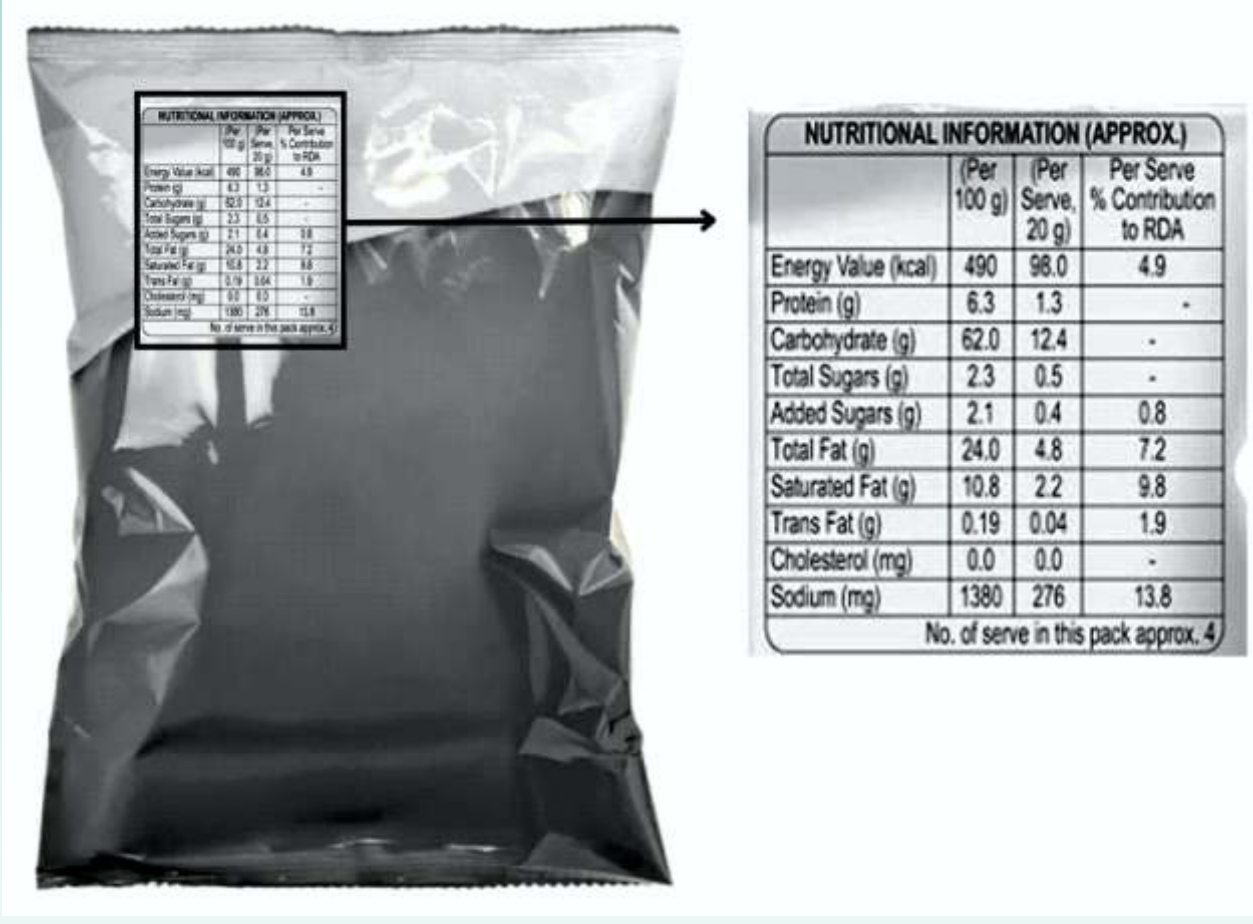
Serving Size = 3 biscuits or 25 grams (approximately)

Number of servings per pack = 40 servings

Total number of biscuits in the pack = Number of servings per pack X Serving Size = 120

Similarly, if we look at the **percentage (%) RDA column**, we can know how much of our daily requirement will be fulfilled by per serve or 3 biscuits consumption from this pack.

ILLUSTRATION OF A READY TO EAT FOOD PACK



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (APPROX.)			
	(Per 100 g)	(Per Serve, 20 g)	Per Serve % Contribution to RDA
Energy Value (kcal)	490	98.0	4.9
Protein (g)	6.3	1.3	-
Carbohydrate (g)	62.0	12.4	-
Total Sugars (g)	2.3	0.5	-
Added Sugars (g)	2.1	0.4	0.8
Total Fat (g)	24.0	4.8	7.2
Saturated Fat (g)	10.8	2.2	9.8
Trans Fat (g)	0.19	0.04	1.9
Cholesterol (mg)	0.0	0.0	-
Sodium (mg)	1380	276	13.8
No. of serve in this pack approx. 4			

The picture represents a ready to eat food pack for consumers. Here, the label can be decoded as:

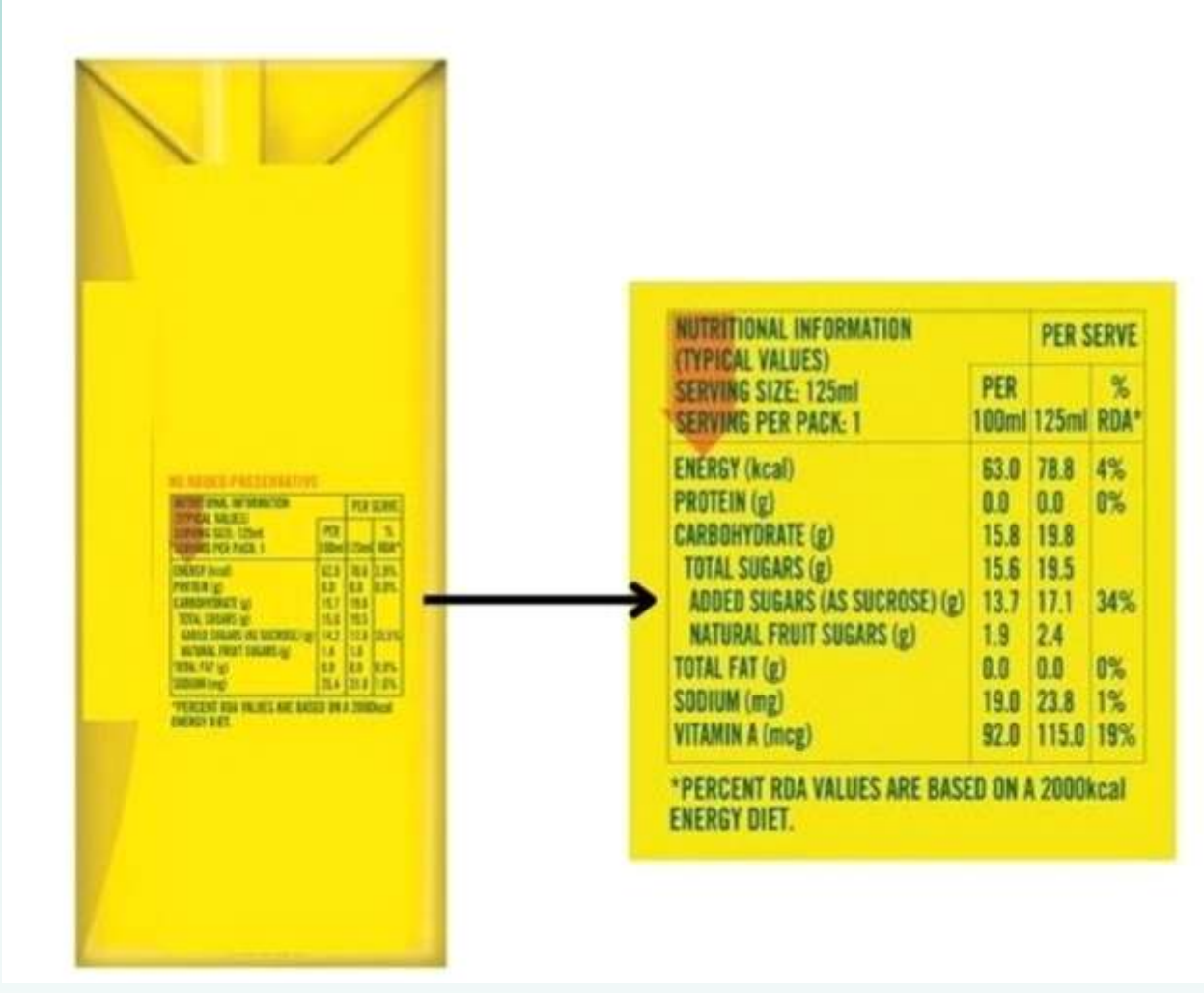
Serving Size = 20 grams

Number of servings per pack = 4 (Approximately)

If we look at the **percentage (%) RDA column**, we can know how much of our daily requirement will be fulfilled by consumption of per serve or 20 grams of this pack.

Consumers may often find single-serving packs in the market: A single-serving pack is a product that is intended to be consumed in a single eating occasion, for example, beverage pack, ready to cook and ready to serve items, etc.

ILLUSTRATION FOR A SINGLE CONSUMPTION PACK (FRUIT BEVERAGE)



The above pack represents a single consumption pack of fruit beverage (125 ml serve) wherein the entire pack is single consumption pack and meant to be consumed in a single occasion.

If we look at the **percentage (%) RDA column**, we can know how much of our daily requirement will be fulfilled by consumption of this entire single pack.

Further, it is also important to note that "Not all single consumption pack are single serve. Some may be lower or higher than the recommended servings size". For example, a beverage pack may have a serve size of 200ml, however you may also find the single consumption pack of the beverage with net quantity 180ml. This information is provided on the pack and consumers may refer to the food label for complete declarations.

Claims Made on Package

FSSAI provides conditions to make claims on the food package as per Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulation, 2018. Therefore, consumers may also find claims made on package on the basis of per serving of the food product.

However, it is pertinent to note that the food companies have the flexibility to choose the criteria for making a claim on the food product (either based on 'per 100g/100ml' or 'per 100 kcal' or 'per serve' for solid/ liquid products) as provided under the said regulations.

For example, claims can be made for protein content based on the given condition for per serve as:

Protein	Source of Protein	10 percent of Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) per serving
	Rich/ High in Protein	20 percent of Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) per serving

Food Service Establishments

These days, eating out is a very common practice and hence it is important for consumers to understand what and how much they eat. In order to help consumers make informed choices while ordering food, the food regulator provides us with a guidance note on menu labelling as a step towards consumer education.

The menu labelling requirement applies to food service establishments including restaurants, cafes, canteens, and any place where food is prepared and served directly to consumers. This includes both dine-in and takeaway and applies to only those places having a central license or 10 or more outlets.

Menu labelling for food service establishments

- Provide customers with information to help them make informed choices about what they eat when dining out.
- Help consumers opt smaller portions.
- Promote public health by making consumers aware of their portion size

What Information must be displayed?

Calorific Value is mandatory to be displayed on Food Menu Card/Menu Board/Digital Menus/Display Boards/Booklets.

The serve size of the food served should be mentioned clearly against the food items in the menu. **The calorific value or energy (in kcal per serving and serving size)** against the food items needs to be displayed, adjacent to its name or price.

Note: Deviation of 25 percent in case of calorific value is tolerable for food service establishments.

In addition, the reference information on calorie requirements shall also be displayed clearly and prominently in the form of this statement:

> ***"An average active adult requires 2,000 kcal energy per day, however, calorie needs may vary"***

However, flexibility in the wordings of the above statement is acceptable, provided that the meaning of the statement is not altered.

Besides this, you will also find veg/non-veg logo and allergen information to be mandatorily displayed at such places. It is also important to note that some products are exempted from mandatory declarations and hence consumers may not find some information displayed in such cases. For example, the food service establishments need not declare the information for:

- Self-serve condiments that are free of charge and not listed on the menu
- Special-order items or modified or customised meals and menu items prepared as per request of the customer

Menu Labelling for Online Delivery Platforms

Online food delivery services are required to provide the same information as physical establishments such as calorific value, veg/non-veg logo, allergen declaration, and nutritional information. These should be available on the online platform where the food items are listed to ensure transparency and consumer safety.

For online food delivery services, this information shall be provided on the platform where the food items are listed.



Sample Menu Display

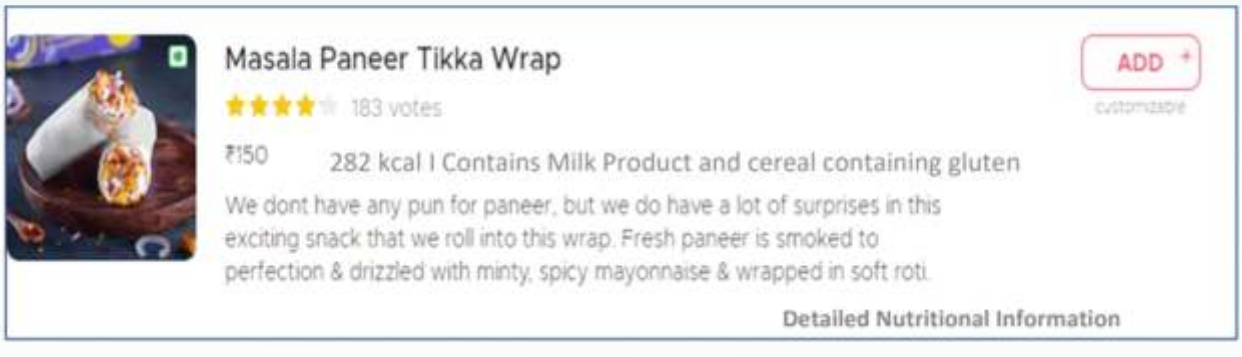
The sample menu is taken from an Indian Restaurant.

Information may be provided per serve or per portion and energy in kcal for the dish to be served.

Additionally, other mandatory information like veg/non-veg logo, allergen information, and the reference information on calorie requirements (2000 kcal) is also mentioned on the menu.



Sample Display for Website/ Mobile Application



The Detailed Nutritional Information (Popup/dropdown) provides information regarding quantity, energy in kcal, protein content, etc.

Portion Control

The growing food portion sizes might well be one of the factors contributing to the increased prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults. Moreover, increased attention has been paid to interventions aimed at controlling portion size.



A wide range of external factors influence food consumption

- Consumers are likely to pay marginally more for a larger portion when several food portion options are available because they feel they are getting more value for money. Value for money can therefore be seen as a mechanism underlying the consumption of larger portions.
- Individuals who engage in mindless eating (eating while distracted and not focused on the food they are consuming) consume larger amounts. For example, watching television, playing a computer game, listening to the radio and dining with others are some of the factors that typically lead to eating larger amounts than intended.
- People have difficulties in estimating amounts of food and, moreover, are unaware of reference portion sizes.
- Factors affecting portion control are multifaceted, including appetite and hunger levels, the type of food consumed, the labelling format, ethnicity and presence of other diners.

Why portion control is important?

In face of the widespread availability of large portion sizes, it is now recognised that individuals may need to invoke personal coping strategies to avoid overeating.

In this context, portion control has been recognised as an important behavioural element for weight management and balanced lifestyle.

Do you know?

Portion size effect (PSE)- refers to a phenomenon where more amount of food is consumed when more is offered.

To cater different consumer preferences, brands often provide consumers with food packs of distinct sizes.



While a smaller pack could be more ideal for children, individuals with smaller appetites, or those seeking a light snack, a regular pack could be best suitable for families, gatherings, or individuals who prefer to purchase in bulk.

Similarly, consumers may refer to the following guiding tips to bring modifications in their daily lives for informed consumption.

Guiding Tips for Portion Control

- **Read Labels:** Food Labels help consumers identify the recommended serving measure to be consumed in a single eating occasion.
- **Look out for calories:** When eating out, consumers may review portion and calories displayed on the menu.
- **Portioning snacks:** It is important to note that a snack is 'something small' and therefore needs to be portioned out accordingly.
- **Match with serving size:** Consumers should try to avoid larger portion sizes at one time, follow divide/share and eat principle. The serving size on food packs may be referred to control the actual amount consumed by an individual.
- **Take breaks in between:** Appropriate time gap between two meals is important in today's time.
- **Choose wisely:** A health-conscious individual might prefer a small pack to manage calorie intake. On the other hand, a physically active person or a family might choose a bigger or regular pack for convenience and cost-effectiveness.
- **Mindful consumption:** To avoid overeating, try these simple mindful eating tips:
    - **Check in with yourself:** Are you truly hungry or just reacting to emotions or habits?
    - **Watch your portions:** Choose a portion that matches your current hunger.
    - **Engage your senses:** Notice the taste, smell, texture, and look of your food.
    - **Stay present:** Avoid distractions like phones or TV while eating.
    - **Pause and reflect:** Eat slowly, check if you are full, and reflect on how the food made you feel.

These tips will help consumers prevent overeating by offering portion control, minimize food wastage, focus on their actual needs and encourage mindful consumption.

Takeaway Exercise

1. **What is your understanding of a 'serving or serve size' and 'portion control'?**

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2. **What do you understand by Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)?**

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3. **What do you understand from percentage (%) contribution of nutrient to RDA?**

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4. **What nutritional information should you look out for on menu label and online delivery platform?**

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5. **Why is it important to look for a claim on the food product which could be either based on 'per 100g/100ml' or 'per 100 kcal' or 'per serve' for solid/ liquid products?**

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Disclaimer

This document is intended solely for informational and educational purposes to empower consumers to make informed decisions about food consumption with respect to serve size and portion control. The information contained herein has been compiled from various credible sources and reflects the regulatory guidance available at the time of publication, including efforts by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of the information provided, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) does not accept any legal liability or responsibility for any loss, damage, or inconvenience caused as a result of reliance on this material. The recommendations and examples provided in this guideline do not substitute for professional medical, dietary, or legal advice. Consumers are encouraged to consult appropriate professionals for specific health or nutrition-related concerns. The inclusion of product or brand examples, if any, is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply endorsement or promotion by FICCI.

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