



January 6, 1993

Serving Sizes -- Final Rule

One of a Series of FDA Regulations Implementing The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990

Brief Summary: This regulation establishes criteria for the declaration of serving sizes in nutrition labeling. The final rule on serving sizes:

1. defines serving sizes on the basis of the amount of food customarily consumed per eating occasion;
2. establishes reference amounts customarily consumed for 139 specific food product categories and establishes a petition process for modifying the list;
3. provides rules for using the reference amounts to determine serving sizes for specific food products;
4. requires that both common household and metric measures be used to declare serving size on the label, e.g., 1 cup (240 mL) for milk, 1 slice (28 grams) for a sliced bread;
5. permits optional declaration of serving size in U.S. measures (ounces or fluid ounces) in addition to the household and metric measures, e.g., 1 cup (240 mL/8 fl oz);
6. allows a second column on the nutrition label to express the nutrient content (a) per 100 grams (g) or 100 milliliters (mL) or per 1 ounce (oz) or 1 fluid ounce (fl oz) for all products; (b) per unit for products in discrete units, e.g., sliced products such as bread, muffins, cookies, ice cream bars, etc.; and (c) per cup popped for popcorn;
7. defines a "single-serving container" as any package that contains less than 200 percent of the reference amount for the food product category. For example, 8 fl oz is the reference amount for soft drinks; therefore, a 12-fl oz can of soft drink is a single-serving container, and its nutrient content must be based on the entire contents of the can. For packages that contain more than 150 percent but less than 200 percent of the reference amount when the reference amount is 100 g (or 100 mL) or larger, the manufacturer may determine whether to declare one or two servings. For example, 245 g is the reference amount for soups; therefore, a 15-ounce can of soup may be labeled as 2 servings;
8. defines a unit of products in discrete units (e.g., sliced bread, muffin) in multi-serving containers as a single serving if the unit weighs more than 50 percent but less than 200 percent of the reference amount. For example, the reference amount of bread is 50 g and, therefore, the serving size of sliced bread is 1 slice if a slice weighs more than 25 g;
9. allows claims such as "low sodium" if the product qualifies for the claim on the basis of the reference amount for the product category. If the serving size differs from the reference amount and if the product qualifies for the claim only on the basis of the reference amount, the regulation requires that claims be followed by the criteria for the claim, e.g., "very low sodium, 35 mg or less per 240 mL (8 fl oz)."