

## How to Keep a Food Journal

Food journals can be a helpful tool in assessing how many calories you are taking in during the course of a day. It is best to keep records for a minimum of 3 days (including a weekend day if possible). When you are completing a good journal it is important that you include **all** foods and drinks, supplements (Boost/Ensure/Whey), and tube feeding/TPN (if applicable) – “If you bite it, write it”.

If you do not have the exact portion size you can estimate using these simple examples:

**A rounded handful** = ½ cup vegetables or fruit, ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta, or a snack serving of crisps or pretzels

**Small handful or golf ball** = ¼ cup of dried fruit

**A matchbox** = 1 oz serving of meat, or a serving of cheese

**Deck of cards, or the palm of your hand** (excluding fingers) = 3oz serving of meat, fish or poultry

**Check book** = Serving of fish (approximately 3 oz)

**Tennis ball** = ½ cup of pasta, or a ½ cup serving of ice cream

**Computer mouse** = Medium baked potato

**Compact disc** = One serving of pancake or small waffle

**Thumb tip or one dice** = One teaspoon of margarine

**A ping pong ball** = Two tablespoons of peanut butter

**Small milk carton** = 8 fl oz glass of milk

**A baseball** = 8 fl oz cup of yogurt, one cup of beans, or one cup of dry cereal

Often times serving sizes will be doubled or tripled – so do not feel like the above is a recommended quantity of food.

After you have completed your food journal you can send it via email to [EPaice@harthosp.org](mailto:EPaice@harthosp.org) or fax at 860-545-3765 (attention: Erin Paice).

The food journal will be analyzed for nutrient intakes and will be compared to your individually estimated nutritional needs. You will be provided feedback on how to make changes to optimize your nutrition and health.

