

Easy eating

Regular with easy to chew options level 7 diet



Information for patients

Sheffield Dietetics



Regular

Easy to chew



Introduction

For a number of reasons some people have difficulty eating their food.

You can still eat and drink many of the foods and fluids you enjoy, although the consistency may need to be altered.

The speech and language therapist may have advised you to change the consistency of your food and drink.

Try to eat and drink when upright and when most alert.

The **diet consistency** you have been recommended is:



Regular

Easy to chew

What does 'Regular - easy to chew' mean?

Food that is easy to chew and can be chosen from a general menu.

Avoid high risk or difficult textures, which includes foods that are:

- chewy
- crunchy
- dry
- crumbly
- crispy
- stringy
- fibrous
- sticky
- bitty.

Also avoid food and drink together (mixed consistencies).

Preparing a 'Regular - easy to chew' diet

- **Meat**
 - cooked, tender and moist pieces
- **Fish**
 - cooked, soft enough cooked fish to break into small pieces with fork, spoon or chopsticks
 - no bones
- **Casserole / stew / curry**
 - liquid portion must be thick (if you are on thickened fluids)
 - can contain meat, fish or vegetables if final cooked pieces are soft and tender
 - no hard lumps

- **Soft fruits**
 - fibrous parts of fruit are not suitable
 - drain excess juice or thicken to appropriate consistency
 - fruits with high water content, like watermelon, may need to be avoided as the water separates from the solid fruit in your mouth. Your speech & language therapist can advise you if this applies to you.
- **Vegetables**
 - steamed or boiled vegetables cooked until soft
 - stir fried vegetables are often too firm and are not soft or tender
- **Cereal**
 - smooth with soft tender lumps
 - texture fully softened
 - any excess milk or fluid must be drained
- **Bread**
 - crustless bread, soft bread cakes or bread that has been soaked in soup or a sauce such as tinned tomatoes
 - bread could be used when preparing other dishes such as blended into a thick, smooth soup. No crusts, grains or seeds
- **Rice**
 - cooked well so it is soft or sticky

Most family meals can successfully be made regular - easy to chew consistency, provided they are well cooked and extra thick fluid is added during preparation.

Try adding nourishing fluids such as milk, cream, sauces or creamy soups, rather than water. Extra butter or margarine can be added when mashing vegetables.

To make meals look more appetising

Your meals don't need to look dull when you have an easy to chew diet. You can make your meals more interesting by:

- Choosing a variety of coloured foods to make the meal look more appetising
- Using more herbs, spices, salt and pepper to improve the flavour, as cooking for longer can dilute the taste of some dishes
- Many 'ready-meals' will successfully be made easy to chew using extra sauce, gravy, milk or cream to achieve a soft texture but be careful when heating that there are no hard or crispy bits.

Eating a balanced diet

The dietitian can help you to devise a balanced eating plan that is adequate in protein, energy, vitamins and minerals. It is important to try and include a variety of different foods in your diet, even when you are following a modified texture diet.

Note. If you are on thickened fluids, please follow the advice your speech and language therapist has given you.

Fluids

It is important to drink enough fluid to keep you hydrated. Try to drink at least 6 to 8 cups of fluid per day, such as:

- water
- squash
- tea and coffee
- milk
- fruit juice
- soup

Meal ideas

Breakfast ideas

All food items must be soft and easy to chew.

- Poached or scrambled eggs
- Omelette (plain or with cream/spreadable cheese)
- Chopped boiled egg in mayonnaise or salad cream
- Thick, smooth porridge or instant oat cereals
- Wheat biscuit cereal soaked in hot or cold milk until smooth and thick - all milk should be fully absorbed
- Avoid cereals with added nuts and dried fruit
- Yoghurt with soft lumps, no hard biscuit bits, seeds or nuts.
- Smoothies
- Skinless sausage
- Spaghetti hoops
- Croquette potatoes or potato waffles (fully soaked so no skins)
- Crustless bread, soft bread rolls or bread that has been fully soaked in sauce, such as tinned tomatoes, so that it is moist.
- Bread could also be used when preparing other dishes such as a thick, smooth soup.
- Yoghurt with soft lumps, no hard biscuit bits, seeds or nuts.

Main meal ideas

All food items must be easy to chew

- Small pieces of soft, well cooked, tender meat and poultry in a thick, smooth sauce or gravy such as a stew or casserole
- Finely minced meat or poultry in a thick sauce or gravy such as bolognese, moussaka or cottage pie
- Tinned sausages or corned beef in a thick sauce or gravy
- Corned beef hash
- Tinned meat or poultry such as stewed steak, minced beef, chicken in white or curry sauce
- Steamed or poached flaked fish* served in a thick sauce. Try using 'boil in the bag' for an easy alternative
- Tinned fish mixed with mayonnaise or thick sauce*
- Fish pie with potato topping*
- Well cooked or tinned lentils, mushy peas and other pulses
- Lentil curry
- Tofu (soya bean curd), 'Quorn™' or textured vegetable protein in dishes such as vegetable casserole, curry or chilli
- Mashed dahl
- Fish mousse
- Well cooked pasta or rice in dishes such as spaghetti bolognese, pasta in sauce, curry
- Tinned pasta such as spaghetti, ravioli or macaroni cheese
- Moussaka made with aubergine which has been peeled
- Lasagne (no hard crusts)
- Creamed potatoes, plantains or yams, instant or well boiled*
- Soft chips fully soaked with sauce (no hard pieces)
- Cheese and potato bake (no hard pastry or hard crusts)
- Dumplings soaked in thick gravy
- Soft potato salad

- Polenta in a thick, smooth sauce or gravy
- Well cooked carrots, parsnips, swede, courgettes, peppers, tops of cauliflower, or broccoli florets*
- Tinned tomatoes, mushy peas, carrots or other vegetables*
- Cauliflower cheese
- Vegetable curry
- Vegetable juices such as tomato and carrot.
- Vegetable soups
- Ripe avocado
- Smooth guacamole

****Remove skin and bones***

Light meals and snacks

All food items must be soft and easy to chew.

- Poached or scrambled eggs
- Omelette (plain or with cream/spreadable cheese)
- Chopped boiled egg in mayonnaise or salad cream
- Houmous
- Smooth pate
- Smooth peanut butter blended into sauces or smoothies
- Fish mousse
- Spaghetti hoops
- Cheese spread, cottage cheese, cream cheese, cheese triangles and other soft cheeses (no rinds)
- Cheese soufflé
- Savoury white sauces
- Crustless bread, soft bread rolls or bread that has been fully soaked in sauce, such as tinned tomatoes, so that it is moist.
- The inside of jacket potatoes* with margarine or butter and soft filling such as cream cheese, cottage cheese, tuna and mayonnaise or Quorn pieces
- Cauliflower cheese

****Remove skin and bones***

Puddings

All food items must be soft and easy to chew.

- Egg custard (no hard pastry)
- Sweet white sauces
- Yoghurt or fromage frais – avoid those with muesli, nuts, grains, seeds, crumble, cereal or candy toppings
- Crème caramel
- Mousse
- Ice cream or frozen yoghurt
- Jelly, milk jelly, blancmange or instant whip
- Soft trifle
- Thick milk puddings such as custard, rice, semolina, tapioca
- Use evaporated and condensed milks as a topping for desserts, puddings and fruit.
- Stewed fruit such as apples, pears or plums*
- Soft tinned fruit such as apricots, peaches or pear segments
- Soft sponge (without nuts) with thick custard or cream
- Sponge pudding (without nuts) served with thick custard or cream.
- Smooth cheesecake
- Ice cream, frozen yoghurt, mousse or sorbet
- Mashed banana with thick custard or cream
- Mashed tinned fruit with thick custard or cream
- Stewed fruit with thick custard or cream
- Pannacotta

****Skins and seeds removed***

Drinks**

(As per clinician recommendations)

- Fresh, dried, packet or tinned milk, such as evaporated, condensed, lactose free, soya, rice, oat or coconut milk, can be used in drinks or when preparing meals and puddings
- Non-dairy milk substitutes, such as lactose free, soya, rice, oat or coconut milk, should be enriched with added calcium where possible; check the food label
- Hot chocolate
- Ovaltine and Horlicks
- Tea and coffee
- Water
- Smoothies, milkshakes and lassi
- Soups
- Smooth fruit juices
- Cordials
- Over the counter nutritional supplement drinks such as Complan™, Meritene™, Nurishment™, protein shakes

****Note:** If you are on thickened fluids, please follow the advice your speech and language therapist has given you.

Adding extra nourishment

If you can only eat small amounts at a time or have lost weight recently, then it is important that foods you eat are high in protein and energy.

Here are some ways to add extra nourishment to your foods.

Enriched milk

To make an enriched milk recipe, try mixing 2 to 4 tablespoons of milk powder into a pint of full fat milk. Mix into a paste with a small amount of milk, then gradually add the rest of the milk until you have a smooth texture.

Try adding one or more of these to your meals, snacks and drinks over the day:

- Full fat milk or milk substitute
- Butter, margarine, oil or ghee
- Milk powder
- Full fat smooth yoghurt, fromage frais or soya alternative
- Cream or cream substitute
- Grated cheese, soft or cream cheese, or cheese spread
- Smooth peanut butter
- Evaporated or condensed milk
- Smooth pureed fruit in syrup*
- Fruit, maple or golden syrup*
- Smooth dessert sauces*
- Seedless jam*
- Honey*
- Sugar*

***If you have diabetes, some of the above information may not be suitable. Please ask your doctor, nurse, or dietitian about this.**

Recipe ideas

Rich scrambled egg

- 2 large free range eggs
- 6 tbsp single cream or full cream milk
- a knob of butter

Lightly beat the eggs, cream and a pinch of salt together until all the ingredients are just combined and the mixture has one consistency.

Melt the butter in a small non-stick frying pan. Pour in the egg mixture and let it sit, without stirring, for 20 seconds. Stir with a wooden spoon.

Repeat until the eggs are softly set and slightly runny in places, then remove from the heat and leave for a few seconds to finish cooking.

Cheesy vegetable hash

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 700g mashed potato (sweet potatoes are a good substitute here)
- 150g cauliflower
- 150g broccoli
- 200g boiled root vegetables
- 1 tsp finely grated parmesan
- 2tsp pesto
- Few basil leaves

Heat the oven to 200°C, Gas mark 6.

Boil the root vegetables until soft enough to chop or mash.

Add the mashed potatoes, stir until softened.

Meanwhile boil the broccoli and cauliflower until well cooked. Then add to the mash and stir until soft. Add the rest of the root vegetables.

Arrange the parmesan, pesto and chopped basil on top and place in the oven to melt but ensure not crispy.

Pasta with Bolognese sauce

- 2 medium onions, peeled and chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
- 500g lean minced beef
- 90g mushrooms, sliced
- 1 tsp dried oregano or mixed herbs
- 400g can tomatoes or chopped tomatoes
- 300ml hot beef stock
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 350g spaghetti (to serve)
- Freshly grated Parmesan (to serve)
- Pasta shapes

Put the onion and oil in a large pan and fry over a fairly high heat for 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and mince and fry until they are both brown and very soft. Add the mushrooms and herbs, and cook for another couple of minutes.

Stir in the beef stock, tomatoes, tomato purée and seasoning. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 40 minutes. Ensure all meat is soft and tender and any gristle has been removed.

Place pasta shapes in a large pan of boiling water and cook until soft and easy to chew. The pasta needs to be very well cooked so that it could be mashed with a fork. Drain well, run hot water through it, put it back in the pan and add a dash of olive oil, then stir in the meat sauce. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top.

Sponge and custard

- 250g golden syrup
- 200g pack butter, softened
- 200g golden caster sugar
- 3 medium eggs
- 200g self-raising flour
- 5 tbsp milk

Heat oven to 180°C, 160°C fan, Gas mark 4.

Spread the syrup onto the base of the baking dish.

Beat the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, then beat in the eggs, one by one.

Stir in the self-raising flour and milk and dollop over the syrup.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until golden and risen.

Eat with lots of custard, cream or ice cream and optional extra drizzles of syrup.

Rice pudding

- 40g / 1½ oz butter
- 100g / 3½ oz pudding rice (or Spanish paella rice)
- 75g / 2½ oz caster sugar
- 1 litre / 1¾ pints full-fat milk
- 150ml / 5 fl oz double cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or ½ vanilla pod, split lengthways
- pinch salt
- plenty freshly grated nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 140°C, 285°F, Gas mark 1.

Melt the butter in a heavy-based casserole dish over a medium heat. Add the rice and stir to coat. Add the sugar, stirring until dissolved. Continue stirring until the rice swells and becomes sticky with sugar.

Pour in the milk and keep stirring until no lumps remain.

Add the cream and vanilla and bring the mixture to a simmer. Once this is reached, give the mixture a final stir and grate at least a third of a nutmeg over the surface.

Bake for 1 to 1½ hours and cover with foil if the surface browns too quickly.

There should be a thick sauce that is not separate from the rice.

Serve at room temperature.

Troubleshooting

Constipation

As well as adequate fluid (see above), increasing the fibre content of your diet may help to prevent or relieve constipation. Try including extra vegetables, pulses, fruit or high fibre cereal, always making sure it is the consistency you have been recommended.

Gentle exercise may also help but please discuss this with your physiotherapist, GP or nurse first.

Mouth care

It is important to pay particular attention to your mouth care in order to reduce the number of harmful bacteria in your mouth. To do this:

- Make sure that you clean your teeth regularly
- Remove dentures overnight and soak in a suitable solution
- Check your mouth for residue after meals, remove residue and rinse with a recommended drink.

Checking your weight

If possible weigh yourself regularly (no more than once a week)

Your weight is

If you are concerned about any changes in your weight, please contact the dietitian.

If you have not been seen by a dietitian and you feel that you would benefit from some dietary advice, please speak to your GP, community nurse or speech and language therapist about being referred to a dietitian.

Contact details

Patient

Name:

Hospital:

Tel number:

Dietitian

Name:

Tel number:

Speech & Language Therapist

Base: Inpatient (RHH / NGH / WPH)
 Community

Name:

Tel number:



**Sheffield
Hospitals
Charity**

To help support your local hospitals visit
sheffieldhospitalscharity.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1165762



Yes I donate
ORGAN DONATION

**Alternative formats can be available on request.
Please email: sth.alternativeformats@nhs.net**

© Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust 2022

Re-use of all or any part of this document is governed by copyright and the "Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005" SI 2005 No. 1515. Information on re-use can be obtained from the Information Governance Department, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. Email sth.infogov@nhs.net