Pureed Foods for People with Dysphagia

Information for patients and families

Read this booklet to learn about:

- ✓ Dysphagia
- ✓ How to prepare pureed foods
- ✓ What foods to choose and avoid
- ✓ A sample daily menu

Name:	
Date:	
Clinician:	
Contact:	

Dysphagia

Dysphagia is the medical word for difficulty with chewing and swallowing.

Signs of dysphagia are:

- coughing or choking when eating or drinking
- feeling like food is stuck in your throat
- holding food in your mouth without swallowing
- a wet or gurgly voice after eating

Dysphagia can be serious. If you cannot swallow properly:

- Food and drink may go into your lungs. This can cause problems with breathing or an infection.
- You may not be able to eat enough of the right foods to stay healthy and maintain your weight.

How to manage dysphagia

Your health care team recommends that you follow a **pureed diet** for dysphagia. This booklet tells you how to do this. You will learn how to prepare pureed foods to make swallowing easier and safer.

These tips can also help you to manage dysphagia:

- Have your meal in a quiet place.
- Take your time when eating and drinking.
- Reduce distractions such as turning off the TV when eating and drinking.
- Sit upright during meal times. Remain upright for at least 30 minutes after.
- Do not talk while chewing or swallowing.
- Swallow one mouthful before taking the next.

Pureed foods

Pureed foods do not need chewing. They are completely smooth with no lumps, skins, strings or seeds.

How to check that food is pureed
Food that is pureed: □ Is usually eaten with a spoon □ Holds its shape on a spoon □ Flows very slowly □ Is not sticky □ Falls off spoon when tilted in a single spoonful □ Does not separate into liquid and solid □ Cannot be sucked through a straw

Preparing pureed foods at home

You can puree other foods using a blender or food processor.

1. Prepare soft and well-cooked foods from the lists on pages 6 and 7.
2. Place food in a blender or food processor.
3. Depending on the type of food, add liquid from the list on page 4 to the blender or food processor.
4. Blend until smooth.
5. Use the checklist on page 4 to make sure the food is pureed. If any lumps or skins remain, strain the food with a fine mesh strainer.

Adding liquid:

Helpful Tips!

To make pureed foods more smooth, you can add:

- water
- broth
- gravies
- sauces
- juice
- milk
- yogurt
- supplement drinks

Do not add too much liquid or the food may be too runny.

Pureeing meats:

Food that is pureed:

- Use meats that have been cooked with moisture (boiled, poached, steamed, or braised).
- Add 4 tablespoons (60 ml) of liquid for every 2 ounces (60 grams) of meat and puree. Add more liquid if needed.

Pureeing meals:

- You can buy or prepare meals made with soft and well-cooked foods that can be pureed at home.
- These foods include entrees such as pasta dishes, cooked meats, and canned foods (soup, chili, and stews).

Some very soft foods like ripe bananas, well cooked potatoes and avocado can be mashed with a fork or masher until smooth. A small amount of liquid may be added to make the food smooth and moist.

Buying pureed foods

Some foods naturally have a pureed texture. You can buy them at the grocery store and they are ready to eat.

These foods include:

- Yogurt
- Smooth puddings
- Smooth hummus
- Apple sauce and other fruit sauces
- Instant cereals like oat bran and cream of wheat
- Baby food

Do not buy foods that have added nuts, seeds, fruit or other chunks.

You may also buy pureed foods online or over the phone and have them delivered to your home. Ask your Registered Dietitian or Speech Language Pathologist for a list of companies that offer this service.

Foods to choose and avoid

	✓ Foods to choose	✗ Foods to avoid
Vegetables and Fruit	• Pureed cooked or canned vegetables • Pureed, canned or soft fruits (such as applesauce) • Pureed or smooth mashed potatoes • Mashed soft fruits and vegetables (such as banana, avocado)	• Tough, raw, or stringy vegetables (such as celery) • Tough, stringy, pulpy or fruits (such as orange, pineapple, watermelon)
Grain Products	• Cooked cereals (such as cream of wheat, oat bran, infant cereal, cream of rice) • Pureed barley, bulgur • Pureed congee or rice • Pureed pasta or noodles • Pureed bread, pancakes or muffins	• Dry cereal • Grain products with seeds, nuts or fruit • Crackers, Melba toast, • Rice cakes • Waffles, French toast
Milk and Alternatives	• Smooth yogurt without fruits, seeds or nuts • Cheese as an ingredient in pureed foods • Pureed cottage cheese • Smooth pudding and custard • Ice cream • Milk or soy beverage	• Yogurt with fruit, seeds or nuts • Hard cheeses, soft cheeses, cheese spread and cream cheese (not as an ingredient in pureed foods) • Rice pudding, tapioca pudding

	✓ Foods to choose	✘ Foods to avoid
Meat and Alternatives	• Pureed meat, poultry and fish without bones • Pureed beans, lentils, chickpeas and other legumes • Mashed soft or silken tofu • Pureed scrambled egg • Smooth hummus	• Seeds • Nuts and Nut butter • Tough or stringy cuts of meat • Cuts of meats with bones or gristle • Sausages, hot dogs, wieners
Mixed Dishes and Entrees	• Pureed casseroles and entrees made with ingredients in this 'Foods to choose' column (such as macaroni and cheese, lasagna) • Smooth, pureed soups	• Dishes or soups with ingredients from this 'Foods to avoid' column, as they do not puree well
Sweets and Desserts	• Smooth, pureed desserts without nuts or seeds • Honey, syrups, sugars, seedless jams and jellies • Ice cream, sherbet, frozen yogurt • Carbonated beverages	• Hard or soft candies
Condiments, Fats and Oils	• Butter, margarine, oil • Pureed or smooth gravies and other sauces • Ketchup, smooth mustard, mayonnaise	• Salad dressings with grainy spices (such as coarse ground pepper, grainy mustard)

Sample daily menu

Here is an example of eating well on a puree diet.

Breakfast	• Muffin pureed with milk • Cream of Wheat • Pureed scrambled egg • Milk • Tea
Lunch	• Pureed turkey • Mashed potatoes with gravy • Pureed green beans • Chocolate pudding • Milk • Strained cream of mushroom soup
Afternoon Snack	• Applesauce • Vanilla yogurt • Water
Dinner	• Pureed pasta with tomato sauce, chicken and broccoli • Mashed banana • Pureed and strained minestrone soup • Milk
Evening Snack	• Pureed cottage cheese • Pureed canned fruit

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