



PATIENT INFORMATION

Soft diet due to chewing and/or swallowing difficulties

You may be experiencing difficulties in chewing or swallowing due to illness or the treatment that you are receiving.

Sometimes on a soft diet, it can become quite difficult to achieve a balanced diet that is nutritionally adequate.

Below you will find some ideas to make a soft diet nutritious and tasty for you whilst you are experiencing these difficulties.

General Tips on a Soft Diet

- Sit upright, take your time, chew food well and relax at meal times.
- Have small frequent meals and snacks.
- Use plenty of herbs, spices, gravy, and sauces to ensure that you have a variety of flavours in your diet, so that you won't get bored.
- If the food is not naturally soft (for example meat, vegetables, fruit), try mashing the food with a potato masher or finely chop it. Cooking the food will help to provide a softer texture.
- Softer food loses its heat quicker, so make sure that the food is very hot when serving.
- Small sips of fizzy drinks with a meal may help improve swallowing. Do not fill yourself up with the fluid though.
- Do not use baby foods, they are a suitable texture but they have a poor nutritional value for adults.
- If you are not managing a soft diet, contact your healthcare professional for advice on a puree or fluid diet.

Suitable Foods for a soft diet

Meat, poultry or offal - cooked in any way and then minced or chopped finely with plenty of gravy or sauce, for example mince meat and gravy, cottage pie, bolognese, minced ham/gammon in parsley sauce, minced chicken in white sauce, shepherd's pie, soups, casseroles.

Fish - poached, flaked or steamed fish in sauce or tinned fish with mayonnaise/salad cream for example 'boil in the bag' fish in sauce, fish pie, flaked fish and parsley/cheese sauce, flaked/mashed tinned sardines in tomato sauce.

Cheese - grated cheese, soft cheese, cottage cheese, cheese spread, cauliflower cheese, cheese sauce over minced meat/flaked fish or cheese omelette.

Eggs - scrambled, poached, omelette, hard-boiled mashed with salad cream/mayonnaise, egg custard, pancakes. Ensure your eggs are well cooked. **Do not** eat raw or under cooked eggs.

Milk - any type, preferably full fat. Try to use at least 1 pint daily, or as advised by your Dietician.

Potatoes - mashed with butter, milk or cream, instant mashed potatoes, jacket potatoes with lots of butter, salad cream or mayonnaise.

Vegetables - ensure that your vegetables are well cooked. Cut them into very small pieces before cooking. Mash them, if necessary, with gravy or sauce. The most suitable vegetables to mash include swede, pulses (lentils, peas, beans), carrots, parsnip, cauliflower, broccoli, sprouts. Try homemade vegetable soups, stews or casseroles.

Fruit - stewed fruit, tinned fruit (often softer than fresh fruit), fresh fruit (well ripened with skin, pith and pips removed). The most suitable fruits include bananas, peaches, pears, oranges, melon or fruit juice.

Bread - You may not be able to manage bread. If you can, choose white bread with the crusts removed. Use plenty of butter/margarine, with a moist filling for example egg or tuna mayonnaise, paste, pate, smooth peanut butter, marmite, cheese spread, cottage cheese. Savoury/sweet bread and butter pudding.

Pasta and Rice - ensure that they are well cooked and use plenty of sauce for example macaroni cheese, spaghetti bolognese, pasta in tomato sauce, ravioli, boiled rice and curry sauce.


Cereals - try breakfast cereals soaked in plenty of milk. The most suitable cereals include porridge, Readybrek® and Weetabix®.

Desserts - try milky puddings, custard, jellies, ice-cream, yoghurts, mousse, Angel Delight®, milk jelly, blancmange, creme caramel, yoghurt drinks.

If you are having difficulties taking medication, discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.

Information given to: _____

Information Given by: Print Name _____ Signature _____

Contact Number  _____

Produced by the department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Torbay hospital

Further copies are available from the intranet (Nutrition and Dietetics website) and iCare