



PATIENT INFORMATION

Soft Diet For people with Swallowing Difficulties

If you have been recommended to follow a soft diet for help with your swallowing.

The following gives you some ideas of how to produce softer foods.

Eat a balanced diet with a variety of foods

A good nutritious diet must contain the following:

- Carbohydrates such as potato, cereals, rice and pasta
- Fats such as oil, butter and dairy foods
- Protein such as meat, fish and eggs
- Vitamins and minerals which are found in a wide variety of foods
- Clear fluids such as water and sugar free squash are better for you
- Have tea and coffee in moderation

It is important to eat a wide variety of foods in order to have all the essential nutrients your body needs.

Meat and poultry – cooked by any method and then minced or finely chopped with plenty of gravy or sauce (such as minced meat and gravy, minced chicken in white sauce, cottage pie, bolognaise, minced ham or gammon in parsley sauce, shepherd's pie, soups, well-cooked stews and casseroles).

Fish – poached, flaked, steamed or tinned fish with mayonnaise or salad cream, 'boil in the bag' fish in sauce, fish pie, flaked cod in parsley sauce, flaked tinned sardines in tomato sauce. Ensure all bones are removed.

Cheese – grated cheese, soft cheese, cottage cheese, cheese spread, cauliflower cheese, cheese sauce over fish, soft vegetables or potatoes, soft macaroni cheese.

Eggs – scrambled, poached, hard-boiled eggs mashed with salad cream/mayonnaise, egg custard. **DO NOT** eat raw or undercooked eggs.

Milk – any type, but preferably full cream milk. Try to use at least 1 pint daily.

Potatoes – mashed with butter, milk, cream, salad cream or mayonnaise. Serve with lots of gravy or sauce. Avoid eating the skins.

Vegetables – Cut into very small pieces before cooking, and ensure they are well cooked and soft. Mash them if necessary with gravy, sauce or butter. The most suitable vegetables to mash include swede, carrots, parsnips, cauliflower, broccoli, butternut squash or sweet potatoes.

Try soups, stews and casseroles to increase your vegetable intake. Avoid vegetables that are leafy, stringy or have skins (such as peas and sweet corn). Have tinned tomatoes rather than fresh tomatoes.

Fruit – stewed fruit, tinned fruit, well ripened fresh fruit with the skin, pith and pips removed (such as bananas, peaches, pears).

Cereals – Well cooked rice with plenty of sauce. Cous cous. Breakfast cereals soaked in plenty of milk such as porridge, Ready Brek®, Weetabix®, soggy Cornflakes®, Rice Krispies®.

Desserts – Try milky puddings, custard, jelly, ice-cream, yoghurts, mousse, blancmange, crème caramel, yoghurt drinks, steamed puddings with lots of custard/cream mashed slightly (avoid dried fruit in sponge), tiramisu, panna cotta or very soft trifle without fruit.

General tips on a soft diet

- Sit upright, take your time, chew your food well and relax at mealtimes.
- Have small, frequent meals and snacks.
- Use plenty of herbs, spices, gravies and sauces, to ensure you have a variety of flavours in your diet.
- If food is not naturally soft (for example, meat, vegetable, fruit), try finely chopping it, or mashing with a potato masher or potato ricer. Cooking food well will help to produce a softer, moister texture.
- Try mincing meat after it has been cooked. Use plenty of gravy or sauce to produce a softer texture.
- Softer food loses heat quicker, so make sure the food is very hot when serving.
- Do not use baby foods. Whilst these have a suitable texture, they have a very poor nutritional value for adults.
- If you are no longer able to manage a soft diet, contact your GP, Speech and Language Therapist and/or Dietitian for advice.

- Avoids foods that are chewy, crunchy, crispy, sticky and crumbly, or have skins or pips.
- Small sips of drinks in between mouthfuls may help improve swallowing the softer diet. Do not fill yourself up with fluid though.

Please ask your Dietitian for a recipe diet sheet if you feel this would be helpful.

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.