

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Dietary advice following surgery for acid reflux, hiatus hernia repairs or Hellers myotomy

### Introduction

For the first two weeks following your operation you will need to follow a puréed diet.

After this time you will be able to progress to a soft diet for about a month.

You should then aim to return to a normal diet only avoiding foods that do not suit you.

### A purée diet - the first two weeks

A purée diet can be very low in energy, vitamins and minerals. It is therefore important to have as varied a diet as possible ensuring that you have enough energy and protein for your needs. Try some of the ideas given throughout this leaflet to ensure your diet is as nutritious as possible.

If you are experiencing difficulties taking your medication, discuss it with your doctor or pharmacist, who may be able to arrange for liquid medication.

### General tips on a purée diet:

- You can use a hand blender or liquidiser to produce suitable textured food. If you don't have one of these, try cooking your food very well and then pushing it through a sieve.
- Try to purée food separately rather than all together. This makes the meal look more appetising.
- Purée food can taste bland, so use plenty of herbs and spices, Worcester sauce, lemon juice, ketchup or mustard.
- It may be necessary to add some liquid to foods when they are being liquidised,

in order to get the right texture. Adding water dilutes the nutritional content of the meal, so if you are underweight add more nourishing liquids and sauces for example full cream milk fortified with milk powder, butter, margarine, cream, cheese sauce, evaporated/condensed milk, honey and syrup etc to foods.

- Fluids such as tea, coffee, squash and water are not particularly nourishing and may fill you up, so try to have these drinks after meals rather than before. Fizzy drinks should be avoided as these may cause excessive bloating.
- Have small frequent meals and snacks, for example, three small meals and three snacks in between
- Food will go cold quite quickly when it is puréed, so make sure that the food is very hot before serving and only ever reheat once
- Try using an insulated plate to help keep your food warm
- Do not use baby food, as this does not have the right nutrition for an adult.
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### **Suitable foods for a purée diet:**

#### **Meat, poultry or offal**

Meat cooked by any method, then liquidised with plenty of gravy, condensed soup or sauce for example beef/lamb/pork with gravy, chicken/turkey with white sauce, or liquidised stews, casseroles and soups.

#### **Fish**

Poached, flaked or steamed fish such as salmon, cod or haddock in sauce (be careful to remove all bones). Add plenty of sauce, for example cheese sauce, parsley sauce, watercress sauce, tomato sauce and then purée/liquidise.

#### **Cheese**

Cheese is only suitable in dishes that have been liquidised for example cheese and potato pie, macaroni cheese, cauliflower cheese or use grated cheese to make a cheese sauce to use with purée meat, fish or vegetables.

#### **Eggs**

Try puréeing with a cheese or white sauce. You may be able to manage scrambled egg and egg custard.

#### **Milk**

Try to use at least one pint daily, or as advised by your dietitian.

#### **Potatoes**

Mash potatoes with plenty of milk, or use instant mashed potato. You can purée potatoes in a blender or use a potato ricer to ensure that they are of a smooth and creamy texture.

#### **Vegetables**

Cook vegetables very well and then purée with gravy or sauce. Some vegetables purée well without adding extra fluid. Some of the most suitable vegetables include carrots, swede, parsnips, cauliflower. Avoid using tough outer leaves and stalks.

## **Beans and pulses**

Lentils, peas and beans purée better as part of a dish such as stew or casserole. Dips such as hummus or butter bean dip are useful for adding flavour to more bland puréed foods.

## **Fruit**

Choose well-ripened fresh fruit, tinned fruit or stewed fruit. Purée with a small amount of juice and serve with custard, condensed/evaporated milk or ice cream. Ensure that you remove skin, pith and pips before you purée the fruit. You should try to have at least one glass of fruit juice or smooth smoothies daily and some suitable fruit.

## **Bread**

This is not suitable on a purée diet.

## **Pasta and rice**

These are more difficult to purée. If you do want to purée rice or pasta, make sure it is well cooked and soft with plenty of sauce added.

## **Cereal**

Porridge or Readybrek® are the most suitable cereals. You may be able to manage other cereals for example, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies® or Weetabix® if you add plenty of milk.

## **Desserts**

Try milky puddings with plenty of milk, custard, ice cream, smooth yoghurts, mousse, Angel Delight®, yoghurt drinks, blancmange, or crème caramel.

## **Fortifying Your Food**

Use the following advice to increase your energy and protein intake if you are underweight or losing too much weight.

## **Fortified milk**

Add 2-4 tablespoons of dried, skimmed milk powder to 1 pint of full fat milk. Use this as a drink, in cereal, or to replace ordinary milk when making custard, milky puddings, milk jellies, sauces, soups or milky drinks (such as coffee or drinking chocolate).

## **Potatoes and vegetables**

Add butter and/or milk to mashed potato and other vegetables. Try pouring cheese or white sauce over vegetables when puréeing.

## **Soups and casseroles**

Add grated cheese or double cream to puréed soups and casseroles. If having tinned soup, use 'cream of' or condensed soup. If having packet soup, make up with milk rather than water. Add extra meat, lentils, pulses or pasta to homemade casseroles and then purée.

## **Breakfast**

Use fortified milk. Try adding honey, syrup, yoghurt, puréed fruit, smooth jam, smooth marmalade or chocolate spread to suitable cereals such as porridge, Readybrek® and Weetabix®.

## **Drinks**

Include fortified milk, fruit juice, milk shakes and high juice squashes or cordial. Avoid fizzy drinks including lagers and beers, lemonade, cola etc.

### **Desserts/Puddings**

Have desserts with ice cream, double cream, evaporated/condensed milk or custard. Add puréed fruit, honey or smooth jam to milky puddings. Avoid 'low fat' or 'low sugar' desserts.

If you are concerned about your weight please ask to be referred to a dietitian.

### **Soft Diet**

After the initial two weeks following your surgery you can progress to a soft diet for around one month.

### **General tips on a soft diet:**

- Sit upright, take your time, chew your food well and relax at mealtimes.
- If food is not naturally soft (for example meat, vegetables, fruits), try finely chopping it or mashing with a potato masher. Cooking food well will help to produce a softer texture, as will adding gravy.

### **Suitable foods for a soft diet**

The following foods are suggestions you should be able to manage.

#### **Meat, poultry or offal**

Meat slow-cooked and then minced or finely chopped with plenty of gravy or sauce, for example minced meat and gravy, minced chicken in white sauce, cottage pie, bolognaise, , shepherd's pie, soups, stews, 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 cod in parsley sauce, flaked tinned sardines in tomato sauce.

#### **Cheese**

Grated cheese, soft cheese, cottage cheese, cheese spread, cauliflower cheese, cheese sauce over fish, eggs or soft vegetables.

#### **Eggs**

Scrambled, poached, omelette, hard-boiled eggs mashed with salad cream/mayonnaise, egg custard, pancakes.

#### **Milk**

Try to use at least one pint daily.

#### **Potatoes**

Mashed potatoes, instant mashed potato, jacket potatoes.

## **Vegetables**

Ensure vegetables are well cooked. Mash them if necessary with gravy or sauce.

## **Fruit**

Stewed fruit, tinned fruit, well ripened fresh fruit with skin, pith and pips removed, for example bananas, peaches, pears, oranges, melon, fruit juice and smoothies.

## **Bread**

Some people may not be able to manage bread. If the bread is crusty remove the crusts. Use plenty of moist fillings for example egg or tuna mayonnaise, paté, peanut butter, marmite, cheese spread, cottage cheese.

## **Pasta and rice**

Ensure they are well cooked and served with plenty of sauce, for example macaroni cheese, spaghetti bolognese, pasta in tomato sauce, ravioli, boiled rice, curry sauce.

## **Cereals**

Try breakfast cereals soaked in plenty of milk, for example porridge, Ready Brek®, Weetabix®, cornflakes, Rice Krispies®.

## **Desserts**

Try milky puddings, custard, jelly, ice cream, yoghurts, mousse, blancmange, crème caramel, yoghurt drinks.

## **After one month of following a soft diet**

If you have been tolerating your soft diet for at least four weeks without any pain or reflux then try to slowly increase the texture of your food back to normal, please ensure you chew your food well.

If you find you are unable to tolerate a particular food then avoid it for a while and retry at a later date.

## **Some foods that might always be difficult to tolerate**

- Tough or dry meat or gristle
- Bread
- Fizzy drinks such as lager, beer, lemonade, cola (these might cause bloating)

**If you are concerned or losing weight, please ask to be referred to a Dietitian**

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.