

IDDSI LEVEL 6: SOFT AND BITE SIZED DIET ADVICE

Nutrition and Dietetic Service

Produced: March 2019

Adult Speech and Language Therapy Service

Review: March 2021

Information for Patients

Leaflet number: Version: 1

INTRODUCTION

If you are having difficulty with chewing or swallowing food, you may need to have a **Soft and Bite Sized** diet as advised by a Speech and Language therapist.

The aim of this booklet is to give you ideas for suitable meal choices, as well as useful tips on how to make mealtimes as enjoyable as possible.

If you have recently lost weight or are underweight, you will find some useful ideas on how to make food as nourishing as possible.

WHAT IS A SOFT AND BITE SIZED DIET?

A soft and bite sized diet consists of foods that are very soft, tender and moist (but with no separate thin liquid dripping from the food) and are presented in bite sized pieces (**for adults, 1.5cm x 1.5cm** i.e. roughly the size of a thumb nail / width of standard dinner fork) to reduce choking risk.

- Can be eaten with a fork or spoon
- Can be mashed / broken down with pressure from a fork or spoon
- Chewing is required before swallowing
- A knife is not required to cut this food but pressure from a fork or spoon held on its side

IDDSI Fork Pressure Test

For **adults** the lump size is **no bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm**, which is about **the width** of a standard dinner fork.

To make sure the food is soft enough, press down on the fork until the thumbnail blanches to white, then lift the fork to see that the food is completely squashed and does not regain its shape

No bigger than
1.5cm x 1.5cm bite size
for adults

**Soft & Bite-Sized food
must pass both
size and softness tests!**

can be used to cut or break this texture into smaller pieces

EXAMPLES OF SUITABLE FOODS

- Bite sized pieces of cooked, tender meat (if texture cannot be served tender or soft at 1.5 cm x 1.5 cm, serve minced and moist)
- Soft fish (no bones)- that can be broken into pieces with fork
- Casserole /stew/curry – if final cooked pieces of meat, fish or vegetables are soft & tender and bite sized, no hard lumps and liquid portion very thick
- Bite sized pieces of fruit – serve mashed, no fibrous parts or excess juice.
- Steamed or boiled vegetables with final cooked size or pieces = 1.5cm. Stir fried vegetables are often too firm and are not soft and tender so should be avoided.
- Fully softened smooth cereal with soft tender lumps no bigger than 1.5cm and no excess fluid/ milk
- Rice – not dry, grainy, sticky or glutinous, should not separate into separate grains, may require a thick smooth sauce to hold the rice together e.g. rice pudding, risotto
- **Bread** is not suitable unless assessed as suitable by Speech & Language Therapist on an individual basis.

Food characteristic to avoid	Examples of foods to avoid
Mixed thin & thick textures	Soup with pieces of food, cereal with milk
Hard or dry food	Nuts, raw vegetables (e.g. carrot, cauliflower, broccoli), dry cakes, bread, dry cereal
Tough or fibrous food	Steak, pineapple, celery
Chewy food	Lollies, sweets, cheese chunks, marshmallows, chewing gum, sticky mashed potato, dried fruits, sticky foods
Crispy food	Crackling, crisp bacon, cornflakes
Crunchy food	Raw carrot, raw apple, popcorn
Sharp or spiky food	Corn chips, crisps
Crumbly bits	Dry cake crumble, dry biscuits (add sauce to make these suitable)
Pips, seeds	Apple seeds, pumpkin seeds, white of an orange
Foods with skins or outer shell	Peas, grapes, sausage skin, chicken skin, salmon skin
Foods with husks	Corn, shredded wheat, bran
Bone or gristle	Chicken bones, fish bones, meat with gristle
Round, long shaped food	Sausage, grape
Sticky or gummy food	Nut butters; overcooked oatmeal / porridge, edible gelatine, sticky rice cakes
Stringy food	Beans, rhubarb
'Floppy' foods	Lettuce, cucumber, uncooked baby spinach leaves
Crust formed during cooking or heating	Crust or skin that forms on food during cooking or after eating e.g. cheese topping, mashed potato
'Juicy' food	Where juice separates from the food piece in the mouth, e.g. watermelon
Large or hard lumps of food lumps	Casserole pieces larger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm; fruit, vegetable, meat , pasta or other food pieces larger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm

Bread should be avoided unless advised by your Speech and Language Therapist. NB The ability to manage fruit with a high water content e.g. water melon where juice separates from fruit in the mouth during chewing needs to be individually assessed.

Ice cream and jelly may also NOT be recommended if you are also having thickened fluids – check with your Speech and Language Therapist.

PRACTICAL TIPS

It is important to enjoy your food and mealtimes.

The following points may help:

1. Adding sauces to drier foods may make them easier to chew and swallow (e.g. thick gravy, parsley sauce, custard, double cream).
2. Include a variety of foods to avoid boredom (see food choice ideas on page 6/7) and to ensure you get lots of different nutrients to keep you healthy.
3. The way food is presented can help to increase your appetite. Meals can be served with garnishes such as lemon wedges and parsley, (we do not suggest you eat these).
4. Foods should be served at the correct temperature to bring out the flavour.
5. Try to eat slowly and serve a small amount at a time so your food doesn't get cold before you finish it. You could heat up another small portion later if you feel you can manage more. Warming your plate before serving may help to keep your food hot for longer.
6. Eat in a quiet and relaxed atmosphere where there is no hurry to finish and sit upright during your meal.
7. Finish one mouthful before taking the next. If you feel any food is at the back of your throat, swallow again before continuing with your meal.
8. If you are unable to manage three meals a day, try eating 'little and often' and take advantage of times when your appetite is good.
9. Have nourishing snacks or drinks handy for when you feel hungry e.g. mousses, milkshakes, yogurts and custard. See below for more ideas.
10. Drinks such as water, tea and coffee provide very little nourishment and can fill you up – try milky drinks instead. Try not to drink just before a meal, as you may not be able to eat as much.
11. A small amount of alcohol helps to stimulate your appetite (check with your Doctor first) e.g. a small glass of sherry or brandy.
12. If you are struggling to cook or shop on a regular basis, make use of convenience foods, which require very little preparation, or order in pre-prepared food from delivery companies. (Also see links for these and store cupboard ideas on page 8).

Your Dietitian or Speech and Language Therapist will be happy to help you, so please contact them if you are worried or have any questions about your diet or swallowing.

BALANCED DIET

You should try to have foods from each different food group everyday NB **all foods must be cut up into 1.5 cm x 1.5 pieces as necessary:**

Protein foods: try to have one of these foods twice per day

- Meat (pieces of meat should be no bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm) or soft fish in sauce,
- Lentils, beans, pulses – well cooked, tofu, Quorn
- Scrambled egg
- Cheese in sauce

Starchy foods: provide energy, have a food from this group at least 3 times per day

- 'Ready Brek', porridge or 'Weetabix' with warm milk
- Mashed potato or chopped pasta, rice with a sauce
- Rice pudding, semolina or custard

Vegetables: which will cook until soft enough to mash/ chop e.g.

- Carrots
- Turnips
- Cauliflower
- Broccoli
- Parsnip
- Swede

Fruit: try to have 2 portions a day of stewed / soft tinned or fresh fruit chopped /pureed / mashed fruit e.g.

- Mango
- Banana
- Apple (without the skin)
- Tinned peaches or pears

Or fruit which can be pureed and sieved if necessary or put in a drink e.g. banana or strawberry milkshake.

Dairy products: provide calcium and protein; try to have the equivalent of at least 1 pint of milk per day

- 1 smooth yogurt (no bits) = $\frac{1}{3}$ of a pint
- 30g/1oz cheese = $\frac{1}{3}$ of a pint

Use full cream varieties and wherever possible make custard, semolina or rice pudding with full cream milk.

Fatty & sugary foods: add more of these foods if you need to gain weight e.g. butter, margarine, oil, cream or grated cheese, sugar, honey or syrup.

SOFT AND BITE SIZED MEAL IDEAS

– all meals / snacks must be cut up into 1.5 cm x 1.5 pieces

BREAKFAST

Cereals soaked or cooked in milk e.g. Ready Brek, Weetabix, porridge (ensure milk is absorbed fully into the cereal)

- Yogurt
- Eggs: boiled or poached, scrambled

BETWEEN MEAL DRINK & SNACKS

Milky drinks e.g.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Cocoa, 'Horlicks' | Add extra |
| • Drinking Chocolate | sugar |
| • Coffee made with milk | to these - caution if |
| • Milk | you have diabetes |
| • Milkshakes | |
| • Smoothies | |
| • Complan | |
| • Fruit juice e.g. Orange, cranberry | |

NB Drinks may need to be thickened; check with your Speech & language Therapist

- Full fat yogurt or soft pudding – see pudding list on page 8.

SNACK MEAL IDEAS

- Smooth soup – home made, packet or tinned – avoid minestrone etc – add dried potato flakes e.g. Smash or breadcrumbs to thicken. Try adding grated cheese. Condensed Cream of soups e.g. Campbell's can be made up with milk – Tomato / Chicken / Mushroom Asparagus
- Scrambled, poached or soft-boiled egg, served with chopped tinned tomatoes and creamed potato or tinned spaghetti
- Corned beef, tinned tuna or salmon, served with tinned spaghetti or creamed potato
- Jacket potato (without the skin) with soft filling e.g. cream/cottage cheese, pate, tuna mayo, egg mayo

MAIN MEAL IDEAS

- Minced / tender & chopped beef, lamb, pork, chicken or turkey (pieces of meat should be no bigger than 1.5cm)
- Shepherd's pie/cottage pie
- Corned beef hash
- Omelette (plain or with cheese)
- Flaked fish in a thick, smooth sauce e.g. cheese, parsley or white sauce
- Cauliflower cheese, broccoli cheese (ensure vegetables are cooked until soft), cheese soufflé
- Vegetable or lentil stew / curries, dhal (well-cooked)
- Quorn mince / lentil Bolognese
- Tofu in thick, smooth sauce

Serve above with, creamed potatoes, instant mashed potatoes, soft boiled potatoes / soft chips in gravy, or well-cooked pasta and & soft / mashed vegetables e.g. carrots, swede, cauliflower, parsnip, broccoli with butter, gravy or sauce e.g. white sauce or mushy peas, tinned plum tomatoes (no juice)

- Pasta dishes such as Spaghetti Bolognese (NB baked pasta dishes e.g. Lasagne may have a hard/ chewy texture especially on top layer so may not be suitable for this diet)
- Risotto

PUDDINGS

- Ice cream / Kulfi – may not be suitable if on thickened fluids
- Milk pudding e.g. rice, tapioca, sago, semolina or custard served with jam / honey / smooth marmalade / cream / sugar / puréed fruit
- Stewed fruit/ soft tinned fruit (pieces no bigger than 1.5cm) in syrup served with custard, evaporated or condensed milk
- Sponge pudding with custard and stewed fruit
- Egg custard (no pastry)
- Fromage frais (full fat)
- Crème caramel
- Trifle (with raspberry, strawberry, i.e. soft fruit)
- Yogurt e.g. thick and creamy or ‘Muller’ fruit corner yogurts
- Mousse e.g. ‘Cadbury’ chocolate mousse, ‘Nestle’ Rolo Dessert
- Blancmange
- Milk jelly
- ‘Instant whip’, ‘Angel Delight’
- Banana (pieces no bigger than 1.5cm) and ice-cream / custard

Make all desserts, where applicable, with full cream milk

TRY ADDING THE FOLLOWING TO YOUR PUDDINGS:

- Cream
- Natural / Greek yogurt (not low fat)
- ‘Complan’ powder – neutral flavour
- Condensed / evaporated milk (ensure well absorbed/ thicken before adding if necessary)

BUYING READY PREPARED SOFT & BITE SIZED MEALS

- **Wiltshire Farm Foods**

Softer foods range – includes soft & bite sized meals and puddings

<https://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com/about-our-food/specialist-nutrition>

- **Simply puree**

A range of texture modified meals and puddings

www.simplypuree.co.uk

- **Oakhouse foods**

A selection of modified texture meals and desserts

www.oakhousefoods.co.uk/specialist-nutrition.html

STORE CUPBOARD IDEAS

- Breakfast cereal such as porridge oats, 'Ready Brek' etc.
- Smooth tinned and packet soups, e.g. cream of chicken, tomato, mushroom and lentil
- Tinned meats, e.g. corned beef and minced beef
- Tinned fish e.g. tuna mayonnaise, salmon and sardines
- Tinned pasta e.g. macaroni cheese, spaghetti bolognese
- Dried potato flakes e.g. 'Smash'
- Tinned milk puddings such as custard, semolina and creamed rice
- Packet mousses, instant whip and jelly
- Long-life products such as UHT milk, fruit juice, yogurts, ready made custard pots
- Powdered hot drinks e.g. 'Horlicks', 'Ovaltine', 'Cocoa', and drinking chocolate
- Tinned cream evaporated and condensed milk.

NB If you are trying to gain weight, then avoid 'low fat' or 'diet' products.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE LOSING WEIGHT

If you are **losing weight** you can add extra nourishment to the food that you are managing to eat. By doing this you will receive more energy and protein, which will help to maintain weight or prevent further weight loss.

MILK

Use full cream milk. To make fortified milk, add 4 tablespoons of milk powder (e.g. Marvel) to 1 pint of full fat milk. Use this milk whenever you use milk e.g. in drinks, puddings, mashed potato and sauces. 1 tablespoon milk powder can also be added to porridge or soup

CHEESE

Add grated cheese to cooked vegetables, mashed potato, soups and sauces.

SOUP

Make packet soups with fortified milk or add 2 tablespoons of milk powder to smooth tinned or packet soup. You could also try savoury 'Complan' soups. These are available from your chemist and some supermarkets.

BUTTER / MARGARINE / OIL

Use plenty on pasta, potatoes and vegetables.

DOUBLE CREAM

Add to soup, potato, cereals, milk puddings and milky drinks

ICE CREAM / EVAPORATED MILK / CONDENSED MILK / FULL CREAM YOGURT/CUSTARD

Use on puddings.

SUGAR / SYRUP / HONEY (caution if diabetic)

Add to drinks, desserts and cereals

Remember to thicken all drinks / foods if advised by Speech & Language Therapist

WEIGHT CHART

Some people find it useful to write down their weight.

If you would like to keep a record of your weight you can do that here. There is no need to weigh yourself more than once per week.

Date

Weight

Nutrition and Dietetic Service / Adult Speech and Language Therapy Service Contact Details:

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**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

reference: March 2019 LND5140

**Developed, produced and reviewed by Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Services –
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust.**

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or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk**