

Dietetics

Easy to Chew Diet

Your Dietitian is: **Telephone number: 024 7696 6161**

A nutritious diet is essential for good health and weight maintenance. This is especially important when you are or have been unwell.

This leaflet provides helpful suggestions on how to make your easy chew diet as nutritious and interesting as possible. Aiming to make sure you are consuming sufficient calories, nutrients and liquids.

What texture is best for me?

You have been advised to have easy to chew foods due to the difficulties you are having swallowing or chewing. You shouldn't need to puree or liquidise your food; however your food should be soft enough to be cut or broken down with the side of a fork or spoon. Adding extra gravy or sauces may make your foods softer and easier to chew and swallow.

The following foods are more difficult to chew and may result in choking. It is therefore advisable to avoid these high risk foods:

- Stringy fibrous foods e.g. pineapple, runner beans, celery, lettuce
- The skins of fruit and vegetables e.g. grapes, peas and beans (broad, baked, soya, black eye)
- Crunchy foods e.g. toast, flaky pastry, dry biscuits, crisps
- Crumbly items e.g. bread crusts, pie crusts, crumble, dry biscuits
- Hard foods e.g. boiled/chewy sweets/ toffees, nuts and seeds



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Which foods do I need to eat?

As far as possible, try to have a variety of different foods each day as no one food group has all the nutrients necessary to maintain health.

Meat, fish and alternatives

These are foods which are high in protein and are the building blocks of the body. We need them to maintain and repair our body's tissues.

They include the following foods:

- Meat
- Poultry
- Pate
- Fish (fresh, frozen or tinned)
- Eggs
- Yoghurt
- Milk
- Cheese and paneer
- Lentils
- Hummus
- Smooth peanut butter
- Tofu, quorn or soya

Energy containing foods

These foods provide fuel for the body. While you are ill or recovering from illness, your body needs more energy than normal.

- If you are underweight or losing weight try to eat more of these foods.
- If you are overweight and eating well you should try to limit how much and how often you have these foods.
- Foods which are high in sugar and are not recommended for people with diabetes or those trying to lose weight. Try to have no added sugar alternatives where possible.

Energy containing foods include:

Starchy foods;

- Cereals (soften with milk), potato, rice, pasta
- Cakes and puddings

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Fat and sugar containing foods such as;

- Butter, ghee, margarine, vegetable oils, double cream
- Squash and fizzy drinks
- Sugar, glucose, honey, seedless jam or marmalade
- Chocolate.

Fruit and vegetables

These foods provide the body with a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. You can use fresh, frozen or tinned varieties or alternatively use fruit or vegetable juices.

Milk and dairy foods

These are an important source of protein, energy and calcium.

Good sources include;

- Milk (Try to aim for 1 pint of milk per day)
- Milk puddings or custard
- Cheese (soft or hard)
- Yoghurt
- Fromage frais

Some tips for soft food preparation:

Meat, chicken, fish

- Steam or poach poultry and fish to keep it soft and tender
- Try slow cooking meat in liquids such stews or casseroles
- Remember to remove any skin, bones or gristle before serving

Potato

- Can be mashed with milk and butter
- Instant mashed potato can be made up with milk and butter
- Try soft roast potato or soft chips that are boiled for longer before baked

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Vegetables

- Cook until soft
- Cream, cheese, butter or milk-based sauces can also be added to create vegetable mash

Fruit

- Tinned, frozen, stewed or soft fresh fruit is suitable
- Soft fresh fruit should be peeled
- Over ripe fruits can be softer e.g. banana

Meal ideas

Breakfasts

- Glass of fruit juice (thickened if needed)
- Tinned pears (juice drained), peaches, grapefruit, mandarin or stewed apple
- Sliced banana
- Ready Brek or other instant oat cereal
- Porridge
- Weetabix, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Branflakes softened with warm milk
- Yoghurt or Fromage Frais
- Scrambled, poached or boiled egg
- Skinless sausages
- Baked beans
- Tinned chopped tomato
- Soft pancakes with syrup
- If you can manage bread, try white or seedless wholemeal bread with crusts removed. You can add butter or margarine, seedless jam, seedless marmalade, honey, lemon curd, cheese spread or smooth peanut butter

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Snack Meals

- Soup (thickened if needed)
- Omelettes plain or cheese
- Poached, scrambled or boiled egg
- Quiche (avoid pastry)
- Tinned pasta such as spaghetti in tomato sauce, ravioli, macaroni cheese
- Jacket potato without the skin or sandwich made without crusts with one of the following fillings:
 - Cream cheese or grated hard cheese
 - Meat or fish paste, pate or corned beef
 - Sardines or pilchards (remove any bones)
 - Taramasalata or other fish roe
 - Tuna or mashed hard boiled eggs mixed with mayonnaise
 - Baked beans
 - Smooth peanut butter, hummus or guacamole

Main Meal ideas

- Corned beef hash
- Shepherd's or cottage pie
- Faggots and thick gravy
- Fisherman's pie
- Fish with a white or butter sauce
- Stew or casseroles or curries using beef, lamb, pork, chicken or root vegetables. Meat should be cut into small pieces and cooked until very tender.
- Meat or vegetables cooked in a jar or packet of sauce, crème fraiche, fromage frais, or condensed soup
- Cheese and potato bake
- Cauliflower or macaroni cheese
- Spaghetti bolognese, lasagne or meat balls

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- Lentil dhal or Aloo gobi
- Risotto

Meals can be served with mashed potato, jacket potato without the skin or soft roast potato (soaked in gravy) and well cooked vegetables. These can be any root vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower, sprouts, courgette, sautéed onion or tinned tomatoes.

Puddings

- Jelly
- Milk jelly
- Rice pudding, semolina, sago, custard
- Mousse
- Angel Delight
- Crème caramel
- Sponge pudding or swiss roll and custard
- Chocolate gateau
- Ice cream, sorbet, frozen yoghurt
- Tinned fruit (remove juice) with custard or cream or evaporated milk
- Fruit fool
- Stewed or well poached fruit (skins removed)
- Soft fresh fruit such as peach, melon, pear, banana
- Trifle
- Eve's pudding
- Soufflé
- Tiramisu

Extra snacks

- Fruit as above
- Fruit smoothies
- Any pudding as above
- Biscuits which are dunked in hot drinks to help soften them

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- Soft chocolates or fudge

What if I have a small appetite?

There may be times when your appetite is not so good and you lose weight. Here are some ideas, which may help you increase the calories and protein in your diet.

Enriching your food and drinks

Please make sure any liquids are at the correct consistency which will be advised by your Speech and Language Therapist.

Fortified milk can be used in place of milk or water to make coffee, hot chocolate, packet soups, milk puddings, custard, cereals and sauces.

To make fortified milk, whisk together **one pint full cream milk** with **four tablespoons of skimmed milk powder** and **refrigerate for up to 24 hours**

Other ideas to increase your intake:

Double cream, evaporated milk, ice cream;

- Add ice cream to milkshakes
- Use cream or evaporated milk in suitable sauces, soups, mashed potato, cereals, custard, puddings, or on jellies

Cream cheese / cheese spread;

- Try to use the full fat varieties
- Add to mashed potatoes or vegetables
- Use as a sandwich filling

Sugar, syrup, honey or seedless jam

- Add to suitable cereals and puddings
- Use as a sandwich filling

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Yoghurt

- Use full fat smooth or thick and creamy varieties
- Add to pureed/soft fruit or use to make yoghurt drinks

Butter, margarine, oil, salad cream or mayonnaise

- Add to mashed potato or use butter or oil to fry foods prior to cooking

Nutritional supplement drinks

If you are still unable to eat sufficient food to maintain your body weight your dietitian may suggest you try a prescribable nutritional supplement drink. These are high in calories and protein to prevent further weight loss or help you gain weight. However, they should not replace meals or snacks, unless your appetite is extremely poor. Your dietitian will advise your GP to prescribe these if needed.

Oral care for people on a high calorie diet

You may have been advised to increase the calorie content of your diet. This might mean eating more sweet, sugary or sticky foods and drinks which are not usually recommended to maintain a healthy mouth and teeth. Keeping your mouth healthy can reduce the risk of other infections, such as chest infections, from occurring.

The following tips can help you balance the benefits of a high calorie diet and a healthy mouth and teeth:

- Visit the dentist regularly and tell them about your new diet and ask about protective treatments for your teeth
- Brush teeth, gums and tongue twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, especially last thing at night
- If possible drink sweet drinks through a straw and don't swish them around your mouth and teeth
- Some sweets which are very sticky and difficult to chew or swallow are best avoided. Those which melt away quickly can be used to boost your calorie intake and are generally better for your teeth too.
- Don't forget medicines can be sugary as well. Try to take them at mealtimes if possible.

Patient Information

Additional information

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further advice and information.

Produced by the Dietetic Department, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust.

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Document history	
Department:	Dietetics
Contact:	26161
Updated:	July 2021
Review:	July 2023
Version:	7.1
Reference:	HIC/LFT/024/06