

Speech and Language Therapy

Soft and bite-sized diet Information Sheet

Why do I need a soft and bite-sized diet?

Your Speech and Language Therapist has recommended that you have a soft and bite-sized diet due to difficulties with chewing and/or swallowing. If you wish to discuss this in more detail then please contact your Speech and Language Therapy team.

What is a soft and bite-sized diet?

- Soft, tender and moist, but with no thin liquid leaking/dripping from the food
- Ability to 'bite off' a piece of food is **not** required
- Ability to chew 'bite-sized' pieces so that they are safe to swallow **is required**
- 'Bite-sized' pieces no bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm in size
- Food can be mashed/broken down with pressure from fork
- A knife is not required to cut this food

Do not choose foods that are: mixed thin and thick textures, large or hard lumps of food, hard, dry, tough, chewy, crispy, crunchy, sharp or spiky, crumbly, sticky, have stringy textures, have skins or outer shells, husks, pips/seeds, bones or gristle, round/long shaped food, crusts that have formed during cooking.

Meal ideas

- **Meat** cooked tender and chopped so pieces are no bigger than 1.5cmx1.5cm lump size.
- **Fish** cooked soft enough to break and serve in pieces no bigger than 1.5cmx1.5cm
- **Fruit** soft and chopped to pieces no bigger than 1.5cmx1.5cm pieces (drain any excess liquid). Do not use the fibrous parts of fruit (for example, the white parts of an orange). Be extra careful if you are eating fruit with a high water content, where the juice separates from the solid in the mouth during chewing (for instance, fruits like watermelon or other melons)
- **Vegetables** steamed or boiled with final cooked size no bigger than 1.5cmx1.5cm. (Stir fried vegetables are too firm and are not suitable)
- **Cereal** served with pieces no bigger than 1.5cmx1.5cm, with their texture fully softened. Drain excess liquid before serving



Patient Information

- **NO BREAD due to high choking risk!**
- **Rice** requires a sauce to moisten it and hold it together. Rice should not be sticky or gluey and should not separate into individual grains when cooked and served. May require a thick, smooth, non-pouring sauce to moisten and hold the rice together

Tips for soft and bite-sized food preparation

Meat, chicken and fish

- Steam or poach to keep soft and tender.
- Try slow cooking meat or chicken in a stew, casserole or curry.
- Remove any skins, bones, tough fat or gristle.
- Pieces of meat must be served finely minced, or in small pieces no bigger than 1.5cm in size.

Potato

- Mash with milk and butter. Instant or frozen mashed potato is useful.
- Try scooping out the inside of a baked potato, discarding the skin.

Vegetables

- Vegetables that can be mashed easily include broccoli, potatoes, carrots, swede, cauliflower and parsnips. Tinned vegetables can often also be easily mashed.
- Peel and remove seeds before cooking, and cook until very tender
- Cream, cheese, butter or milk-based sauces can also be added and fully mixed in.
- No salad leaves, cucumber or raw tomatoes.

Fruit

- Fruit that can be easily mashed include banana and must be no bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm.
- Hard fresh fruit need to be peeled and stewed before eating.
- Drain away any juice that has separated during the cooking process.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this leaflet please contact the UHCW Speech and Language Therapy team on: 02476 965709

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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