

## Speech and Language Therapy

# Easy to chew diet information sheet

### Why do I need an easy to chew diet?

Your speech and language therapist has recommended that you have an easy-to-chew 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 an easy to chew diet?

- Normal, everyday foods of soft/tender texture (this may include 'mixed thick and thin texture' food and liquids)
- Any method may be used to eat these foods (e.g. fingers, fork, spoon, chopsticks etc.)
- Food piece size is not restricted; therefore foods may be a range of different sizes. Food pieces can be smaller or bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm (0.6 x 0.6 inches)
- You should be able to 'bite off' pieces of soft and tender food and choose bite-sizes that are safe to chew and swallow
- You should be able to chew pieces of soft and tender food, so they are safe to swallow without tiring easily
- Your tongue should be able to move food for chewing and apply pressure until the food is soft and moist enough to be easily swallowed
- The food should not contain any bone, gristle or other hard pieces that cannot be swallowed safely.



## Patient Information

**Do not choose foods that are:** hard, dry, tough, chewy, crispy, crunchy, sharp or spiky, sticky, fibrous, have stringy textures, pips/seeds, bones or gristle.

Your speech and language therapist will advise if bread is suitable.

### Meal ideas

- Meat cooked until tender.
- Fish cooked soft enough to break apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon
- Fruits that are soft enough to break apart into smaller pieces with the side of a fork or spoon. Be sure to drain any excess liquid.

Do not use the fibrous parts of fruit, for example the white parts of an orange. Be careful when eating fruit with high water content, where the juice separates from the solid in the mouth during chewing. For example, fruits like watermelon or other melons.

- Vegetables are steamed or boiled until tender. Stir fried vegetables may be too firm for this level.
- Cereal is served with texture softened. Drain excess liquid before serving.
- Rice does not have any special cooking requirements at this level.

**Check with your clinician for direction about bread and sandwiches (and appropriate sandwich fillings).**

### Tips for easy to chew 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.

#### 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.

## Patient Information

### Vegetables

- Vegetables that can be mashed easily. These include broccoli, potatoes, carrots, swede, cauliflower and parsnips. Tinned vegetables can often also be easily mashed.
- Peel and remove any 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 tinned apricots, peaches or pears
- 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

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