University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Patient Information

Speech and Language Therapy

Easy to chew diet information sheet

Your speech and language therapist (SLT) has recommended an easy-to-chew diet because you have difficulty chewing or swallowing.

If you would like to discuss this in more detail, please contact your speech and language therapy team.

What an easy-to-chew diet is

- Normal, everyday foods with a soft or tender texture (this may include food with both thick and thin textures, such as soups with soft pieces).
- You can use any method to eat these foods, such as fingers, fork, spoon or chopsticks.
- Food piece size is not restricted - pieces may be smaller or larger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm (0.6 x 0.6 inches).
- You should be able to ‘bite off’ pieces of soft food and choose safe bite sizes to chew and swallow.
- You should be able to chew pieces of soft food until they are safe to swallow without becoming too tired.
- Your tongue should be able to move food around your mouth and press on it until it is soft and moist enough to swallow easily.
- Food should not contain bone, gristle or any hard pieces that cause choking.

Avoid these foods:

Do not choose foods that are hard, dry, tough, chewy, crispy, crunchy, sharp, sticky, stringy, or fibrous, or foods that contain pips, seeds, bones or

gristle.

Your speech and language therapist will tell you if bread is safe for you to eat.

Meal ideas

- Meat cooked until tender.
- Fish cooked until soft enough to break apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon.
- Fruits that are soft enough to break into smaller pieces with the side of a fork or spoon.
    - Drain any excess liquid before serving
    - Avoid fibrous parts, such as the white parts of an orange.
    - Take care with fruits that have a high water content, like watermelon or other melons, as the juice can separate from the solid pieces in your mouth.
- Vegetables steamed or boiled until tender. Stir fried vegetables may be too firm for this diet.
- Cereal softened with milk or liquid, then drain excess liquid before eating.
- Rice does not have any special cooking requirements.
- Bread and sandwiches - Check with your clinician to see if they are safe for you, and to discuss suitable fillings.

Tips for preparing easy-to-chew food

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 skins, bones, tough fat or gristle before serving.

Potatoes

- Mash with milk and butter. Instant or frozen mashed potato is also suitable.
- Scoop out the inside of a baked potato and discard the skin.

Vegetables

- Choose vegetables that can be mashed easily, such as broccoli, potatoes, carrots, swede, cauliflower or parsnips.
- Tinned vegetables are often soft and mashable.
- Peel and remove seeds before cooking and cook until very tender.
- Cream, cheese, butter or milk-based sauces can be fully mixed in for extra flavour.
- Avoid salad leaves, cucumber or raw tomatoes.

Fruit

- Fruit that can be easily mashed includes banana and tinned apricots, peaches or pears.
- Hard fresh fruit should be peeled and stewed before eating.
- Drain away any juice that has separated during cooking.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the UHCW Speech and Language Therapy team on: 024 7696 5709.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format contact us on 024 7696 5709 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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