

Dysphagia Diet Level 4: Thickened Puree Foods

Diet description

This diet consists of foods that are very smooth, creamy and moist. Pureed foods do not have any lumps and are not sticky or gooey. They do not require biting or chewing. Foods are “pudding-like” and can be eaten with a spoon.

Who needs this diet?

This type of diet is recommended by a provider, dietitian or speech-language pathologist based upon your specific needs. This type of food is for people who may experience the following:

- Moderate or severe dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)
- Weakness in the muscles of the mouth and/or throat
- Pain or tiredness with chewing
- Missing teeth or poorly fitting dentures
- High risk for choking
- Require close or complete supervision while eating

How to prepare pureed food

Foods in this diet are prepared by mashing, grinding or blending until a very smooth, consistent texture is achieved. A blender or food processor is usually needed. Food should be moist, but not sticky.

- Use cooked, canned or fresh foods
- Blend, mash or use a food processor until foods are very smooth and soft
- Remove skins, hulls or shells; some food may need to be put through a strainer after it is blended to remove excess liquid

- Add small amounts of gravy, sauce, vegetable juice, milk or cooking water to moisten foods and maintain consistency
- All food should be the same consistency.
- Thicken liquids to the recommended consistency

Bread products do not puree well. They often become sticky because of the gluten found in them.

If your speech-language pathologist has also recommended thickened liquids for you, some of your pureed foods and beverages may need to be thickened. Your speech-language pathologist will tell you if this applies to you.

Treatment

Often the most effective and immediate treatment for difficulty swallowing is to change the consistency of food or liquid to make swallowing safer. In most cases, softer foods are easier to swallow. Diet changes maybe short-term. Your speech-language pathologist will monitor your swallowing and advance your diet when appropriate.

Complications

People with dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) are at risk for choking, aspiration pneumonia, and other respiratory problems. These serious conditions can result in sudden medical emergencies or chronic illnesses that affect health and quality of life.

In order to eat and drink safely and get the nutrition you need, it is important to follow your new diet. Your health care team has given you this information as part of your care. Ask your provider, dietitian or speech-language pathologist if you have questions.

Level 4: Pureed Foods

Food Groups	Safe Foods	Foods to Avoid	Liquids to Thicken
Milk / Dairy	Creamy or custard style yogurt Pureed cottage cheese Sour cream	Cream cheese with nuts or pineapple Firm cheese	Milk Ice cream Sherbet Popsicles Shakes/malts
Meat and Protein	Pureed meats, poultry or fish Smooth hummus Smooth bean dips (example: creamy refried beans) Pureed hot dish Braunschweiger Pureed eggs	Peanut butter Nuts Scrambled, fried or hard-cooked eggs Any meat that cannot be blended into a smooth, creamy consistency Meat that is fibrous or stringy	
Vegetables	Pureed cooked vegetables, smooth and without lumps Mashed potatoes, yams or squash with no lumps Tomato paste or sauce with no lumps	Raw vegetables, lettuce Cooked vegetables that cannot be blended into a smooth consistency Tomato sauce with seeds	
Fruit	Pureed fruit (without liquid, pulp, seeds, peelings or chunks) Smooth applesauce Pureed bananas Pureed papaya Pureed avocado Canned pumpkin	Raw fruits Fruit leather, roll-ups, fruit snacks Stringy fruit, like rhubarb Canned pineapple or canned fruits with skins and seeds Any fruit that cannot be blended into a smooth, creamy consistency	Fruit juice
Bread, Cereal and Grains	Hot cereal with pudding-like consistency, such as cream of wheat, cream of rice, Malt-O-Meal; without extra liquid Well cooked pasta, noodles or bread stuffing that have been pureed smooth Slurried bread and bread products Slurried cookies	Granola, granola bars, energy bars, rice cakes Cereals with nuts, chunks, or large flakes Bread, hard rolls, dry toast, bagels or baguettes Dry crumbly rice Crackers, biscuits Waffles, pancakes, French toast	

Patient Education

Food Groups	Safe Foods	Foods to Avoid	Liquids to Thicken
Soup	Pureed, creamy soups	Soup with lumps, chunks or seeds	Broth, other thin soups
Sweets / Desserts	Pudding, custard Crustless cheesecake or lemon meringue pie Chocolate mousse	Anything hard, sticky, gooey or textured	Malts Milkshakes Eggnog Popsicles Gelatin, Jello Ice cream
Other/ Fats	Butter or margarine Strained gravy and smooth sauce Salt (if allowed), pepper, herbs, spices Ketchup, BBQ sauce, mustard Honey, smooth jellies, syrup Sugar, artificial sweetener Mayonnaise	Olives Sticky foods Pop corn Seeds, nuts	Vinegar Salad dressing

