

Level 6 Soft and bite-sized food

North Devon District Hospital

Dietetic Service

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

Introduction

Difficulties with eating, drinking and swallowing are called '**dysphagia**'. This condition affects lots of people due to different causes. A Speech and Language Therapist has assessed and diagnosed your eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.

Your Speech and Language Therapist has recommended that you only eat Level 6 (Soft and bite-sized food)



Your Speech and Language Therapist has recommended that all your drinks should be:

- 4. Extremely thick
- 3. Moderately thick
- 2. Mildly thick
- 1. Slightly thick
- 0. Thin (un-thickened)

It is really important to drink enough fluids. Drinking 8-10 cups (approx. 2L per day) will ensure you keep well hydrated and healthy. Drinks can be hot or cold, for example milk, fruit juice, tea or coffee.

Choosing and preparing Level 6 Soft and bite-sized food

Small, tender lumps visible within the food. For adults, the lumps must be **no bigger** than 1.5cm.

Minced and moist food:

- Can be eaten with a fork, spoon, or chopsticks
- Can be mashed or broken down with pressure from a fork, spoon or chopstick
- A knife is not required to cut this food but could be used to help load the fork or spoon
- Chewing is required
- Should be soft, tender and moist but with no separate thick liquid
- Biting is not required
- Tongue force is required to swallow the mass of food
- It is possible to squash a sample using finger pressure
- Pressure from a fork or spoon held on its side can be used to cut this texture into smaller pieces. When pressed with a fork or the bowl of a spoon, the food squashes and does not return to its original shape.



Image kindly provided by the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016

www.iddsi.org/framwork

It is important to eat a variety of food as our bodies need a range of nutrients every day. Finely mince or chop the foods from each group:

- **Protein foods** help build muscle and repair tissue. These include meat, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu and Quorn. Try to eat 2-3 portions per day.
- **Starchy foods** are our main source of energy. This includes potatoes or pasta, and smooth porridge or breakfast cereal, prepared as described. Try to eat some of these foods with every meal and snack
- **Dairy food and alternatives** provide calcium and protein. Try to have 2-3 portions every day of full-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage frais or dairy alternatives. Use the fortified milk recipe (next page) for drinks and when making puddings.
- **Fruit and vegetables** – five portions per day is recommended to provide essential vitamins, minerals and fibre.

Equipment to prepare Level 6 meals

- Potato masher – can be used to remove lumps e.g. in potatoes, vegetables or fruit. A fork can be used to mash smaller items e.g. banana or a single portion of potato.
- Hand held blender – for speedy blending of foods in the pan or jug such as soups or sauces.
- Small balloon (wire) whisk – Useful for adding in dry powder like milk powder, corn flour or thickeners. Cream and yoghurt can also be easily whisked into sauces.
- Liquidiser/food processor – Ingredients can easily be added to fortify foods when using a liquidiser e.g. fortified milk, grated cheese or soft breadcrumbs.

Ensure that **all equipment is cleaned thoroughly** after use as food can become trapped and hard to clean once it's dried on.

Some foods **may need to be re-heated** after altering the texture. This can easily be done in the microwave or in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. This is only to be done once and any remaining food must be thrown away.

Freeze 'extra' meals – allow to cool and freeze quickly. Allow to thaw completely before reheating.

Reheat foods until piping hot and allow to cool to individual preferences.

Needing extra nourishment?

If your appetite is poor or you have low/lost weight, you may need extra nourishment.

- Aim to have 3 small meals and 2-3 nourishing snack each day
- Try to have something to eat every 2-3 hours (during waking hours)
- Avoid diet to slimming foods such as reduced fat, low fat and sugar free or low calorie varieties.
- Full cream milk to be used in all drinks / food.
- Fortify foods (consider ideas in the table below)

Fortified Milk Recipe

Whisk 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder thoroughly into 1 pint of full fat milk and use throughout the day in your drinks/meals

Food	Ideas to add extra nourishment
Cereals	Fortified milk or smooth full fat yogurt, cream, honey, seedless jam, syrup or liquidised fruit
Sauces	Grated cheese * cream cheese, silken tofu, milk powder, coconut milk, smooth full fat yogurt, evaporated milk, cream, butter, margarine
Mashed potato	Grated cheese*, cream cheese, milk powder, smooth nut/seed butters or pastes, cream, crème fraiche, margarine, butter, olive oil
Vegetables	Full fat salad cream, full fat mayonnaise, smooth nut/seed butters or pastes, grated cheese*, smooth full fat yoghurt, sauces, olive oil, margarine, butter
Soups	Grated cheese*, mascarpone or other full fat soft/cream cheese, evaporated milk, fortified milk, milk powder, silken tofu
Puddings	Smooth full fat yoghurt, evaporated or condensed milk, full fat crème fraiche, coconut milk powder, custard, cream, chocolate sauce, seedless jam, honey.

Do not use stringy or chewy cheese, or cheese with rind.
Hard cheese like cheddar, parmesan or red Leicester is best.
Always make sure it is melted and fully incorporated into your meal or snack.

Level 6 (Soft and bite-sized Food)



Foods	Prepare all to Level 5 Minced and Moist (no bigger than 4mm to fit between fork prongs with excess fluid drained off)	Avoid
<p>Protein foods</p> <p>Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat</p>	<p>Chopped, well cooked, lean tender meat, fish and vegetarian alternatives served in sauce or gravy, e.g. hot pot, casserole, curry, stew, roast beef, pork, lamb.</p> <p>Shepherds or cottage pie.</p> <p>Sliced cold meat – cut up small and mashed in sauce, baked beans or tinned spaghetti to moisten.</p> <p>Potted meat.</p> <p>Meat, fish or vegetarian pate mixed with chopped pasta or cooked vegetables.</p> <p>Tuna mashed with mayonnaise/sauce.</p> <p>Eggs – scrambled, baked, poached or boiled and mashed with butter or mayonnaise. Cheese soufflé.</p> <p>Note: Ensure all bones are removed from fish.</p>	<p>Hard, tough, fatty or gristly meat.</p> <p>Sliced cold and sausage meats – roast beef, pork, chopped pork, luncheon meat, pepperoni, salami, chorizo.</p> <p>Fried/breaded/battered food such as fish fingers, chicken kiev, breaded turkey escalopes, fritters.</p> <p>Dry, hard or crusty pastry such as oven cooked pies, scotch pies, pork or game pies.</p> <p>Scotch eggs.</p> <p>Fried eggs.</p>

Foods	Prepare all to Level 5 Minced and Moist (no bigger than 4mm to fit between fork prongs with excess fluid drained off)	Avoid
<p>Starchy carbohydrates Include with every meal</p>	<p>Porridge, Ready Brek™ or other porridge mixes without 'bits'.</p> <p>Any plain cereal such as Weetabix™, All-Bran™, cornflakes, Rice Krispies™ – add milk, allow to soften and drain off any excess fluid.</p> <p>Cooked pasta – boil until soft, cut into small pieces and serve with lots of sauce e.g. cheese or Bolognese.</p> <p>Tinned spaghetti/hoops in sauce, ravioli in sauce.</p> <p>Well cooked noodles in sauce.</p> <p>Well-cooked white rice and served with plenty of sauce.</p> <p>White or sweet potatoes, boiled until soft and mashed or cut into small pieces.</p> <p>Flesh only of baked potato – mash inside of potato and discard skin.</p> <p>Chunky chip shop style chips – add sauce or gravy to soften and chop into bite sized pieces.</p> <p>Pureed toast with butter and jam – use bread with no seeds or grains, remove crusts; lightly toast and break slices into a liquidiser; add plenty of melted butter and warmed jam and blitz to level 6.</p> <p>Ask your Speech and Language Therapist or Dietitian how to prepare pre-gelled 'soaked' white or wholemeal plain bread or plain crackers to meet your needs.</p>	<p>Dry cereal.</p> <p>Muesli of any variety.</p> <p>Pasta or noodles that are firm to bite (al dente).</p> <p>Baked pasta dishes with hard toppings like crisps cheese or breadcrumbs.</p> <p>Rice without a sauce. Sticky or glutinous rice.</p> <p>Potatoes skins.</p> <p>Crispy chips such as French fries.</p> <p>Bread with hard crusts, newly baked bread.</p> <p>Dry toast.</p> <p>Rolls with grains on top, newly baked rolls.</p> <p>Naan or pitta bread.</p> <p>Crackers, oatcakes.</p> <p>Pizza.</p>

Foods	Prepare all to Level 5 Minced and Moist (no bigger than 4mm to fit between fork prongs with excess fluid drained off)	Avoid
Soup Always ensure that this is thickened to your appropriate drink level	Smooth soups with very soft and tender meat, fish, lentils, split peas or silken tofu. Thick vegetable soups with soft chunks mashed and cheese, soft breadcrumb or cream added for extra nourishment.	Soups with mixed texture such as chunky vegetable soup, Scotch broth, French onion soup or any soup with croutons.
Vegetables	Tomatoes – mash tinned varieties, remove skin and mash fresh tomatoes. Well cooked vegetables – check these are soft, not stringy and have no stalks, such as mashed swede, turnip, carrots, butternut squash, beetroot cauliflower, broccoli, sprouts and onions. Chopped mushrooms, peppers, courgettes – well cooked and served in sauce. Mushy peas, tinned peas – mashed well. Mashed ripe avocado.	Salads and salad vegetables – lettuce, cucumber, raw carrot, onions, pepper, celery, coleslaw. Raw vegetables. Firm undercooked vegetables with stalks including stir fried vegetables. Cabbage. Green/runner beans. Sweetcorn.
Fruit	Soft fresh or tinned fruit, mashed e.g. pears, peaches, kiwi fruit, banana, strawberries, raspberries. Apples or pears – stewed with skins removed. Drain any excess juice. Fruit juice thickened to your appropriate drink level if required.	Hard fresh fruit such as apples. Fibrous fruits such as citrus fruit or pineapple. Dried fruit – figs, dates prunes, raisins.

Foods	Prepare all to Level 5 Minced and Moist (no bigger than 4mm to fit between fork prongs with excess fluid drained off)	Avoid
Dairy and alternatives	<p>Cottage cheese, soft cream cheese such as mascarpone, ricotta, soft goats' cheese, full fat Philadelphia™ or cheese spread.</p> <p>Yoghurt/fromage frais – smooth or with large pieces of fruit removed.</p> <p>Silken tofu can be used in sauces, soups and desserts as a substitute for cream.</p>	<p>Solid pieces of cheese.</p> <p>Cheese with rind.</p> <p>Stringy cheese such as mozzarella or gruyere.</p> <p>Chewy cheese such as halloumi or paneer.</p>
Desserts and sweet snacks	<p>Milk puddings such as custard and rice puddings.</p> <p>Mousse, whips.</p> <p>Sponges, plain cakes, steamed puddings and drop scones – add custard, thick cream yoghurt, chocolate sauce and break up into bite sized pieces.</p> <p>Plain biscuits softened in soaking solutions, prepared following the packet instructions on the thickener prescribed by your health professional.</p> <p>Choc rolls broken into bite sized pieces.</p> <p>Chocolate buttons (small sized)</p> <p>Ripe avocado mashed with banana.</p>	<p>Ice Cream.</p> <p>Dry sponge.</p> <p>Cakes with royal icing.</p> <p>Fruit cake – may contain nuts.</p> <p>Crumble, tarts, flans.</p> <p>All dry biscuits or biscuits with coatings, fillings, chocolate chips, nuts or fruit.</p> <p>Doughnuts.</p> <p>Pieces or bars of chocolate.</p> <p>Sweets – mints, boiled, novelty mix gums.</p> <p>Breakfast bars with grains or a crumbly texture.</p>
Savoury snacks	<p>Corn snacks – Quavers™, Wotsits™, Skips™ – with care.</p> <p>Ripe avocado mashed with cream cheese or Greek yoghurt.</p> <p>Seasonings such as pepper or finely ground herbs and spices could be added for extra flavour. Fortified soups.</p>	<p>All other crisps, nuts, Bombay mix, Twiglets™ etc.</p>

Sample meal plan

6 SOFT & BITE-SIZED

Meal	Day 1	Day 2
Breakfast	<p>Fruit juice</p> <p>Crushed cornflakes softened with milk and excess drained off, served with chopped or mashed strawberries or raspberries.</p> <p>Boiled egg chopped with butter.</p>	<p>Fruit juice.</p> <p>Rice Krispies softened with milk and excess drained.</p> <p>Pre gelled 'soaked' bread with baked beans.</p>
Mid morning	See snack ideas	See snack ideas
Lunch	<p>Soft Spanish potato omelette copped and served with mashed tinned tomatoes.</p> <p>Softened crackers with cream cheese.</p>	<p>Tinned ravioli in tomato sauce – cut into pieces.</p> <p>Yoghurt with chopped tinned mango.</p>
Mid afternoon	See snack ideas	See snack ideas
Evening meal	<p>Dahl with well-cooked white rice.</p> <p>Tinned rhubarb and double cream.</p>	<p>Roast chicken chopped in thick gravy and served with mushy peas and mashed potatoes.</p> <p>Fromage frais.</p>
Bedtime	Fruit smoothie	Malted milk drink such as Horlicks™

Further information

If you have any queries about your diet, please do not hesitate to contact the dietetic team.

Dietetic Department
North Devon District Hospital
Barnstaple
Telephone: 01271 322306 (Monday- Friday)

Useful websites

International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDSSI)

Website: <https://iddsi.org/>

Nutrition and Diet Resources (NDR)

Website: <https://www.ndr-uk.org/>

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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