

Dysphagia Easy to Chew Diet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Dietitian: _____

Speech Language Pathologist: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

What is Dysphagia?

Some people have trouble swallowing when eating solid food and/or drinking liquids. When you have trouble swallowing, this is called 'dysphagia' (sounds like dis-fay-jah).

Signs of dysphagia include coughing, choking, gurgly voice, throat clearing, runny nose, teary eyes, increased trouble breathing, unexplained rise in body temperature, the feeling of food being stuck in your throat when you eat, leftover food in your mouth after swallowing, and/or trouble starting your swallow. Please note, however, that not everyone who has dysphagia shows these signs.

When you have dysphagia, you might need to change what and how you eat to make swallowing easier and safer.

A swallowing problem could cause food or liquid to go into the lungs. This is called 'aspiration' (sounds like ass-per-ay-shun). If you aspirate, you could get a lung infection such as pneumonia (sounds like new-moan-yah).

Which food texture is safest for me?

We recommend you have a 'Dysphagia Easy to Chew' diet. This means all foods should be moist, soft, and easy to chew.

Other diet recommendations:

What can I do to help make swallowing easier?

- Keep distractions to a minimum by eating in a calm and quiet place.
- Remember to swallow before talking.
- Sit upright while eating.
- Take small bites and sips.
- Eat and drink slowly.
- Swallow your mouthful completely before taking another bite or sip. You might need extra swallows for each bite or sip.
- Moisten foods by adding the following:
 - smooth gravy or sauce
 - butter, margarine, or oil
 - mayonnaise, sour cream, or yogurt

Foods you need to avoid

A. Foods of mixed consistencies:

These are foods that have both a solid and liquid component. Because of this, they are more difficult to swallow.

Some examples include:

- broth-based or cream-based soups with pieces of meat or vegetables
(Examples: chicken noodle, cream of mushroom)
- dry cereal with milk
(Examples: Rice Krispies®, Raisin Bran®)
- canned fruit in juice or syrup
(Example: fruit cocktail)

B. Sticky foods

These foods can stick to the roof of your mouth and are hard to push down with your tongue.

Some examples include:

- peanut butter, cream cheese, cheese spread (unless used as an ingredient)
- toffee, caramel, jube-jubes, hard candy, chewing gum
- pizza, bagels
- dried fruit

C. Dry, crumbly, and crunchy foods:

These foods fall apart easily and can cause coughing and/or choking.

Some examples include:

- any bread or baked products that are dry, hard or contain hard and dry ingredients
(Examples: toast, cookies, crackers, scones, muffins, whole grain and multigrain bread, English muffins, croissants)
- dry cereals, including granola or muesli
- rice, couscous, quinoa
- popcorn, pretzels
- crackers, potato chips, taco chips or shells
- coconut, nuts, seeds
- raw vegetables

Other foods to avoid:

Meal delivery options:

Dysphagia Easy to Chew Foods

Note: If you have also been told to thicken fluids, please see the Thickened Fluids booklet for more on what drinks to choose.

Food Group	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
Milk and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plain or smooth, flavoured yogurt • cottage cheese (drained) • hard cheese (e.g. cheddar, Swiss) • processed cheese slices • other cheeses if used as an ingredient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yogurt with nuts, seeds, or fruit • all soft cheeses, cheese spread, and cream cheese
Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooked refined cereals (e.g. instant oatmeal, Cream of Wheat®, Cream of Rice®, Pablum® cereal) • soft pasta and noodles with sauce, margarine, or butter • soft bread or soft rolls: white or whole wheat • soft moist pancakes • muffins moistened with margarine, butter, or gravy • naan or roti while warm or softened in sauce • moist dressing/stuffing • rice with sauce, margarine, or butter • congee (pureed or strained) • crackers soaked in soup • soft French toast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooked cereals or breads with bran, seeds, nuts, or fruits • all dry cereals • breads that are hard or crumbly (e.g. toast, scone, bagel, English muffin, croissant, Danish) • French toast, waffles • dry or plain rice or pasta • congee (unless pureed or strained) • dry breads (unless moistened with sauce, margarine, or butter (e.g. pita bread, tortilla, naan, roti, chapatti)) • crackers, melba toast, rice cakes, chips, popcorn, pretzels

Food Group	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
Meat and Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinly sliced, tender meat • whole meat patties, meatloaf, meatballs, skinless sausages, wieners • whole, moist, tender poultry and boneless fish • canned tuna and salmon (with soft bones mashed in) • soft, moist scrambled eggs • plain or cheese omelette • soft cooked, minced, moist legumes and lentils • smooth hummus • soft and medium tofu • strained rajma (kidney bean) or chana masala/cholay (chickpea) • thick dahl (lentil curry) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tough, dry or fried meats • bacon, sausage with skin • battered, breaded, or fried meat, poultry, or fish • hard cooked eggs except in minced egg salad • nuts and seeds • fried tofu • vegetarian patties that are dry and crumbly (e.g. soy burgers) • peanut or nut butter
Fruits and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applesauce and other fruit purées • soft, canned fruit if drained • soft fresh fruit (e.g. banana, mango, papaya) • stewed dried fruit • soft, well cooked vegetables • mashed or boiled potatoes, pureed scalloped potatoes, skinless squash, yam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard, raw fruit • fresh juicy fruits (e.g. oranges, watermelon, grapes) • all raw vegetables, including salads • stringy, tough or fibrous vegetables (e.g. bok choy, gai lan, celery) • vegetables with skins (e.g. corn, lima beans) • fried potatoes, French fries • fried vegetables

Food Group	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
Soups, Mixed Dishes and Entrees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pureed or strained soups, congee, or kichari (lentil and rice soup) thickened to the fluid consistency recommended • sandwiches with moist, soft salad filling (e.g. fish or egg salad) • soft, moist mixed dishes (e.g. casseroles) made with minced ingredients in smooth sauces or gravies • soft frittatas and crustless quiches with allowed ingredients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other soups that are not pureed or strained (e.g. chicken noodle, cream of mushroom) • grilled sandwiches (e.g. grilled cheese) • entrées with pastry unless soft and moistened with sauce (e.g. chicken pot pie) • pizza
Desserts and Sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all soft desserts that will not crumble (e.g. puddings including tapioca pudding, rice pudding, custard, mousses) • honey, jellies, sugar, syrups • pie filling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • desserts or baked goods with seeds, nuts, or dried fruits • desserts that are dry, crumbly, or chewy (e.g. cakes, squares, bars, brownies, loaves, crisps, cobblers, pies, tarts pastries, cookies, Rice Krispies® squares) • hard pie crust or other pastry • jam with seeds, marmalades

If you have questions after leaving the hospital,
Call 8-1-1 to speak to a Registered Dietitian.

For an interpreter, say your language in English.
 Wait until the interpreter comes on the phone.

Adapted with permission: Vancouver Coastal Health FI.710.D46 Dysphagia Dental Soft Diet (April 2014)

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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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