

Pre-mashed diet

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having a pre-mashed diet recommended to you by your speech and language therapist. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your speech and language therapist, GP or nurse.

What is pre-mashed food?

Pre-mashed food:

- should be soft, tender and moist
- needs only a very small amount of chewing
- may contain soft lumps which are easily mashed with a fork
- usually needs a very thick, smooth (non-pouring) sauce, gravy or custard.

People on a pre-mashed diet should not eat:

- food with hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, dry, crispy, crunchy or crumbly bits
- food with tough skins, pips or seeds
- foods that contain bones or gristle
- hard chunks e.g. pieces of apple
- sticky foods e.g. cheese chunks, marshmallows
- 'floppy' foods e.g. lettuce, cucumber, uncooked baby spinach leaves
- juicy food where juice separates off in the mouth to a mixed texture e.g. watermelon
- food that forms a crust or skin during cooking, heating or standing
- food with fluid, gravy, sauce or custard that may thin out or be separated off.

While on a pre-mashed diet, you may find it hard to eat enough to maintain your weight.

Ask a dietitian for advice or speak to your GP if you are losing weight without meaning to.

How do I swallow pre-mashed food safely and comfortably?

Follow this advice when you eat, drink and take medication:

- Ideally sit upright in a chair while you eat and for at least half an hour afterwards
- You should be awake and fully alert when you eat and drink
- Make sure you only have one mouthful of food or fluid at a time
- Swallow food and clear your mouth before you take the next mouthful. This might mean swallowing twice
- Don't rush mealtimes. Take frequent pauses during the meal and try to chew well
- Take sips of fluid with your food
- At the end of each meal, make sure your mouth is empty and check for any food in the cheeks
- If you feel something has gone down the wrong way, try to clear it with a cough and have a short break from eating and drinking. If this is happening often, contact your speech and language therapist or GP
- Make mealtimes a pleasant and relaxed experience

If you already have exercises and specific advice from your speech and language therapist please follow these.

What should I eat?

- Choose a variety of foods each day to get the nutrients you need
- Try to have three main meals each day with snacks in between
- Include foods high in protein at every meal time (meat, fish, eggs, cheese, pulses, legumes, milk, yoghurt, nut pastes)
- Stay well hydrated by sipping fluids throughout the day.

Breads and cereals – for energy and fibre

Food	Choose	Avoid
Breakfast cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereals that fully soften and fully absorb (soak up) the milk • Porridge or instant oat cereal • Cornflakes and Rice Crispies soaked in milk so they are no longer crunchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muesli or toasted cereals • Cereals with clusters • Cereals containing dried fruit, nuts, seeds or coconut
Bread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No bread unless it is assessed as suitable by your speech and language therapist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All types of bread • Pizza
Pasta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well cooked, mashed pasta with plenty of sauce • Shell or tube pasta, ravioli or tortellini with meat or cheese filling and sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al dente/undercooked pasta
Rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well cooked rice with plenty of sauce • Rice pudding, creamed rice or semolina • Risotto is suitable if creamy and moist (no lumps) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undercooked, dry rice • Fried or steamed rice which can be sticky and dry
Potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steamed or soft boiled potatoes with all skin removed, cooked thoroughly and mashed with butter/margarine, cheese, milk or cream • Instant mashed potato • Skinless jacket potato with moist fillings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacket potato skin • Crispy potatoes such as hash browns, fries, fried potatoes or wedges
Cakes and pastries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biscuits soaked in tea, hot chocolate or hot milk- ensure the biscuit is very soft • Soft moist cake mashed with plenty of custard • Eve's pudding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cakes with dried fruit or nuts • Crackers • Danish pastries • Flapjacks.

Meat, fish and alternatives – for protein

Food	Choose	Avoid
Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well cooked meat with skin, bones, fat and gristle <u>removed</u> and thick sauces added to moisten • Moist mince and tomato Bolognese sauce • Shepherd's or cottage pie, extra gravy for moisture • Casseroled or slow cooked meat or chicken in gravy • Pieces of soft tender meat must be served no bigger than 1.5cm / 0.5 inch • If your meat cannot be finely minced or mashed, it should be pureed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gristly, stringy or chewy meat • Tough or dry meat • Whole cuts of meat or poultry such as pork chops or steak • Bacon • Dry casserole or hard dry pieces of minced meat
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen or tinned fish with skin and bones removed, soft enough to break up into small pieces with a fork • Poached white fish with cheese or parsley sauce • Fish pie or fish cakes with soft breadcrumbs and sauce • Tinned fish with mayonnaise, mackerel with tomato sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish with bones
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrambled, boiled or poached eggs • Omelette with added cheese, cream or sauces • Quiche or frittata with vegetables & crust removed • Soufflé 	
Beans, pulses, lentils, nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned baked beans– must be skinless • Lentils, chickpeas, bean pate or dahl, cooked or soaked until mashable, these may need some blending • Soya beans, miso soup and tofu • Smooth peanut butter • Nut pastes like tahini (sesame paste), humus or pesto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts • Crunchy peanut butter • The skin of beans or pulses
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soya milk, soya yoghurt • Yeast extract spreads (e.g. Marmite or Vegemite) • Quorn mince • Tofu, very soft • TVP (textured vegetable protein) 	

Dairy foods – for protein and calcium

Food	Choose	Avoid
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any variety of milk including: regular fat, semi-skimmed or skim milk, buttermilk, evaporated milk, condensed milk, almond milk, coconut milk • milkshakes or flavoured milks • Fruit smoothies (well blended) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit smoothies with hard lumps of fruit
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese sauces • Soft cheeses such as cottage cheese and ricotta cheese • Cheese soufflé • Grated cheese can be added to most savoury dishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard cheeses • Cheese with fruit or nuts • Cheese blocks or cubes
Yoghurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any smooth yoghurt • Greek yoghurt • Frozen yoghurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruit or nuts • Yoghurt topped with granola or dry oats
Milk based desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream, custard • Mousse, crème caramel, tiramisu • Ice-cream, sorbet • Jelly • Cheesecake with biscuit base removed 	

Fruits and vegetables – for vitamins, minerals and fibre

Food	Choose	Avoid
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or tinned fruit, mashable and soft • Fruit smoothies – well blended • Fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard fruits such as apples and melon • Fruit with skin e.g. grapes • Seeds and pips • Dried fruit
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, tinned or frozen vegetables peeled and well cooked until soft (boiled, steamed, microwaved or roasted) • Pulses which are easily mashed • Mixed vegetable mashes such as carrot and swede or sweet potato and parsnip • Add cheese sauce or other sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw vegetables or floppy foods (lettuce, cucumber, baby spinach) • Vegetable skins • Whole corn kernels • Stringy or rubbery non-tender vegetables (brussel sprouts, asparagus, celery) • Crispy vegetables (fried potatoes, potato skins)

Sample meal plan - ensure all of the examples are mashed down with a fork before serving

Breakfast

- Porridge or instant oat cereal - made with full cream milk (and cream for added energy)
- Mashed scrambled eggs or omelette with added cheese for increased protein

Mid-morning

- Milky coffee
- Yoghurt and mashed banana (soy yoghurt for a non-dairy alternative)

Lunch

- Shepherd's pie, cottage pie or fish pie with the crust removed
- Poached or flaked fish with cheese sauce or parsley sauce

Mid-afternoon

- Nourishing drink (see page seven for examples)
- Biscuits softened in hot tea, coffee or hot chocolate

Evening meal

- Condensed or packet soup made up with milk and/or cream (avoid croutons)
- Tinned mackerel with tomato sauce
- Lasagne, ravioli or spaghetti bolognese, well cooked with plenty of sauce

Before bed

- Ice cream, frozen yoghurt or sorbet
- Soft, mashed, tinned or stewed fruit with cream, ice-cream or custard.

How can I make my pre-fork-mashed meals look good?

Food that looks good helps with your appetite, to help you can try:

- **presenting food** using garnishes to liven up meals e.g. paprika or pepper
- **varying flavour** by adding herbs, spices, lemon juice or sauces e.g. soy sauce, curry sauce, mint sauce or ketchup
- choosing **different coloured** foods, e.g. mixing brightly coloured vegetables with paler food such as creamed potato or cheese to make meals look good
- serving at the **right temperature** to make sure your food tastes good (reheat if needed)
- **adding** grated cheese, butter or margarine, milk, cream, sauces, or gravy to mashed potato or vegetables
- **serving desserts** in individual glasses and adding sauces or cream or dusting with chocolate or icing sugar.

What can I do to save time?

Tinned, packet, frozen or boil in the bag **ready-to-eat meals** can be reheated according to the instructions and then blended or mashed. You may need to add fluid to make sure they are smooth.

If you have a freezer, you may wish to **portion and freeze food** by:

- preparing four to six servings of a dish and dividing it into portions
- cool the food after cooking
- put each portion into clean, empty yoghurt pots, margarine tubs or other plastic containers
- label and date the containers
- freeze immediately.

To eat, defrost portions thoroughly at room temperature or in the microwave, then reheat.

Never re-freeze food once you have defrosted it and never reheat food more than once as this can cause food poisoning.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Tips to help with a small appetite

If you have lost your appetite, had unintended weight loss or have been advised by your dietitian to fortify your foods then the information below will help.

Always follow your speech and language therapist's recommendations even when using this information.

You can add extra calories and protein to your food without increasing the amount, e.g.:

- add grated cheese, butter or margarine, salad dressings, sauces, salad cream, mayonnaise or oil to vegetables
- add yoghurt, jam, cream or honey to breakfast cereals
- add yoghurt, cheese, margarine or butter, milk or cream to sauces
- add one tablespoon of milk powder or two tablespoons of cream to soups
- add grated cheese, cream, margarine or butter to mashed potato
- add jam, honey, syrup, cream, ice cream, milk or custard to puddings.

General tips

- Eat frequent small meals, five or six a day
- Use full fat and sugar foods e.g. full cream milk, thick and creamy yoghurts, high juices
- Avoid 'diet' or low fat products
- Have nourishing drinks in between your meals and use fortified milk– see recipes below
- Try to eat puddings often to add variety and calories.

Managing constipation

Constipation can be a problem for some people following a pre-fork-mashed diet.

Make sure you include high fibre foods in your meals e.g. porridge oats, Weetabix, fruit and vegetables. Drink plenty of fluid, aiming for eight to ten cups or three to four pints of fluid per day. If needed, speak to your GP about laxatives and use them as prescribed.

Nourishing drinks ideas

Fortified milk

Mix two to three tablespoons of milk powder into one pint of full cream milk. Have on its own or use in milk based food and drinks.

Hot chocolate malted drink

Heat 150ml of full fat milk for one and a half to two minutes, then whisk in two tablespoons of milk powder and three tablespoons of hot chocolate or malted drink powder. Stir in two tablespoons of double cream and serve.

Smoothies

Blend together half a small banana, broken into chunks, 50g frozen strawberries; 100ml vanilla yoghurt and 50ml milk until smooth, adding extra milk if needed.

Milkshake

Blend together 150 - 200ml fortified or full cream milk, one scoop of ice cream, four teaspoons of Nesquik or two teaspoons Crusha syrup and two teaspoons of cream.

Creamy soup

Whisk together one sachet of powdered soup and 150ml of hot milk, making sure you get a smooth consistency. Add two tablespoons of cream for extra energy.

Other nutritional drinks can be purchased over the counter: Complan, Meretine Soup or Meretine Shake, Ovaltine, Horlicks or drinking chocolate, Mars, Yazoo, Galaxy, Aero, super market smoothies and milkshakes are all suitable.

If you are taking thickened fluids remember to thicken these drinks as usual!

You may have had one of the following nutritional drinks prescribed by the dietitian to increase your energy (calorie) and protein intake, prevent weight loss and supplement your nutrition:

Nutricia Fortisip, Fortisip Compact, Fortisip Compact Fibre, Fortisip Compact Protein, Abbott Ensure Plus Advanced, Nutricia Scandishake

Nutritional supplements prescribed by a dietitian or GP cannot be thickened. Please discuss options with your dietitian or speech and language therapist. There is a range of thickened supplements available.

Useful sources of information

Wiltshire Farm Foods

Soft and pureed meals delivered to your door

www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com

Freephone: 0800 773 773 (24 hours, 7 days per week)

Nutricia Nutillis

Delicious recipes for people with swallowing difficulties

www.mynutillis.co.uk

British Dietetics Association

www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts

Age UK Advice

www.ageuk.org.uk

Freephone: 0800 169 6565

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the pre-mashed diet, please contact the senior health dietitians on 020 8725 1420/1022 or the speech & language therapists on 020 8725 3007/4492 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

