

Making the most of your fork mashable meals

Head & Neck Dietitians

This leaflet has been designed for people who are having difficulty chewing or swallowing and have been advised to have a fork mashable diet. This leaflet is intended to help you choose suitable foods, adapt your own dishes and give you advice on how to get the most nourishment from your fork mashable meals.

What are fork mashed meals?

As the name suggests fork mashable food is food that can be mashed with a fork. It is soft, tender and moist but needs some chewing. It may contain soft lumps which are easily mashed with a fork. These foods are best served with a sauce or gravy but should not be sticky or crumbly.

Fork mashed food

requires very little chewing	can be mashed until it forms soft lumps
is well cooked, soft and moist	should be pureed if too hard to mash with a fork
has no tough skins, pips or seeds and is free from bones	can have sauce, gravy or milk added if it appears too dry

Making the most of your meals

This advice is suitable if you are experiencing a poor appetite, losing weight unintentionally and/or are not managing your usual diet. It gives advice on how to maximise your calories and protein.

- Eat “**little and often**” – this means, eat small meals and snacks throughout the day, every two to three hours.
- **Fortify** meals by **adding** butter/spread, oils, cream, cheese, evaporated/condensed milk, honey, jam, and/or sugar to suitable meals.
- Choose foods which are **highest in energy** (calories) such as full fat foods rather than diet and/or low fat alternatives.
- Drink **nourishing drinks** such as full fat (blue top) milk, hot chocolate, Horlicks®, Ovaltine®, smoothies and/or nutritional drinks prescribed by your Dietitian.
- Include foods **high in protein** at every meal time (eggs, cheese, pulses, beans, milk, yoghurt, and/or smooth peanut butter).
- Choose a **variety** of foods to get the nutrients you need. Try to have different meals and snacks each day.
- Stay well **hydrated** by sipping fluids throughout the day, however try not to drink a

glass/cup of fluids before meals as this can make you feel full.

Nourishing Drinks

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

- Some examples include; Nutricia Fortisip®, Fortisip 2kcal®, Fortisip Compact®, Fortisip Compact Protein®, Scandishake®,

Other nutritional drinks can be purchased over the counter or made at home if you are worried about weight loss or finding eating difficult:

- Complan®, Nestlé Meritene® soups or Meritene® shakes
- Homemade smoothies with milk, ice-cream, tinned or fresh fruit
- Ovaltine®, Horlicks® or hot chocolate
- Enriched milk; 2-4 tablespoons of Skimmed Milk Powder mixed into 1 pint of Full Fat Milk. (Use in soups, milkshakes, mashed potato, in breakfasts, in homemade desserts etc.)

Fortifying Meal ideas

- Add lots of cheese to cottage pie, meatballs, bolognese or lasagne
- Cream, evaporated milk, condensed milk in teas/coffees, soups, yoghurts and breakfast cereals.
- Add a knob of butter to soft meats, soup, potatoes and vegetables and add your favourite oils to salads.
- Have plenty of butter/jam, honey, soft cheese, and/or smooth nut pastes on suitable bread/toast
- Add cream, honey and/or jam to yoghurts and puddings
- Add cream, butter, full fat yoghurt to sauces

Snack/pudding options to help you manage 'little and often'

Trifle with seedless fruit	Sticky toffee pudding
Creamed rice or semolina	Soufflé
Egg custard tart with pastry removed	Soft moist cake with custard or cream
Cheesecake with biscuit base removed	Yoghurts and high protein yoghurts
Angel Delight®, Mousse, Crème caramel	Ice-cream, sorbet, blancmange, jelly, tiramisu
Stewed fruit with custard or cream	Biscuits soaked in tea, hot chocolate or milk
Chocolate bar without nuts or dried fruit	Fresh or canned fruit (pears, banana, apricots etc) fork mashed
Wotsits®, Quavers®, Skips®, Cheesy balls	Dips (hummus, tzatziki, avocado, french onion)

Breakfast ideas

Cereal

- Moistened cereals with a smooth texture and no hard lumps

Examples: Porridge oats, Ready Brek ®, Weetabix ®, Shreddies ®, Cornflakes, Rice Crispies ®

- Avoid muesli or toasted cereals
- Avoid cereals containing nuts, dried fruit or coconut

Eggs and beans

- Boiled, scrambled, or poached eggs
- Omelette with added cheese
- Canned beans with tomato sauce
- Canned spaghetti / ravioli with tomato or cheesy sauce

Avocado

- Mashed with lemon and / or soft cheese (i.e. cream cheese, ricotta, cottage cheese or feta)
- Yoghurt, fruit and custard - choose full fat versions for extra calories
- Thick and creamy yoghurt, high protein yoghurts* with added banana and honey
- Soy yoghurt or fromage frais ®
- Rice pudding with cinnamon and honey (hot or cold)
- Custard
- Tinned or mashable fresh fruit (banana)

*High protein yoghurts such as Fage®, Total®, Skyr®, Danio® and/or Liberté® are a good source of protein. If only available in zero/low fat add cream to add calories and taste. Other brands are also available.

High Protein Foods

Protein is important for healing, repairing of tissues and the immune system. When recovering from illness or surgery there is a higher need for protein. As long as they are well cooked, all protein foods are fork mashable. Try to choose a high protein food at each meal

Meat and poultry - suitable if well cooked with skin, bones, fat and gristle removed

- Skinless hotdogs / sausages
- Moist mince and tomato / Bolognese sauce
- Mashed meat balls or burgers plain or with sauce
- Meat in fish paste or corned beef
- Shepherd's or cottage pie, casseroled or slow cooked meat /chicken in gravy

Fish

- Fresh, frozen or tinned fish with skin and bones removed
- Poached white fish with cheese or parsley sauce
- Fish pie with a creamy sauce
- Tinned fish with mayonnaise or mackerel with tomato sauce

Eggs

- Scrambled, boiled or as an omelette with added cheese, cream or sauces like hollandaise

- Quiche or frittata and vegetables with crust removed

Nuts and beans - high in protein but need to be prepared suitably to be in a soft /fork mashable form

- Canned baked beans without pork sausages

Lentils, chickpeas, bean pate or dahl (canned or cooked from dry, then blended if they remain too tough to eat)

- Soya beans, miso soup and tofu
- Smooth peanut butter
- Nut pastes like tahini (sesame paste), hummus or pesto

Dairy/ dairy alternatives - soft, high in protein and calories (if you choose full fat varieties)

- Grated cheese can be added to most savoury dishes
- Cream / spreadable cheese, cottage cheese or ricotta
- High protein yoghurts such as Fage®, Total, Skyr®, Danio®, and/or Liberté®,. If only available in zero/low fat add cream to add calories and taste. Other brands also available.
- Milk, yoghurts, custard
- Soya milk, soya yoghurt

Other

- Yeast extract spreads (Marmite®, Vegemite® and Promite®)
- Quorn® mince or sausages
- TVP (textured vegetable protein)

Savoury meal ideas

Rice

- Risotto with well-cooked Arborio rice is suitable if the mixture is creamy and moist
- Avoid fried or steamed rice as it can be very sticky

Pasta

- Well-cooked shell or tube pasta mashes down well with plenty of tomato sauce
- Ravioli or tortellini with meat or cheese filling and sauce

Potatoes

- Steamed or boiled potatoes (skin off) cooked thoroughly and mashed with margarine, cream or grated cheese
- Jacket potato (skin off) with moist fillings like cottage cheese, sour cream, baked beans, tuna and mayonnaise

Vegetables

- Fresh, tinned or frozen vegetables peeled and well cooked (boiled, steamed, microwaved or roasted)
- Avoid seeds and fibrous or stringy vegetables like celery, cabbage and runner beans
- Pulses mash easily (try lentils, kidney beans, chick peas, butter beans or baked beans)

- Avocados mash well and provide plenty of energy (calories)
- Cauliflower and broccoli cheese
- Mixed vegetable mashes—carrot & swede / sweet potato and parsnip

Foods to avoid

Breads

- No bread unless assessed as suitable by your Speech and Language Therapist
- Pizza

Cereals

- Avoid dried fruit, nuts, seeds, coconut, crunchy cereals (like granola / clusters)

Vegetables

- Whole corn kernels and peas (unless mushy peas)
- Raw vegetables or leafy foods (lettuce, cucumber, baby spinach)
- Rubbery non-tender vegetables (brussels sprouts, asparagus, celery)
- Crispy potatoes and crispy vegetables (hash browns, french fries, fried potatoes, wedges, potato skins)

Fruits

- Pineapple (fresh or canned), grapes
- Dried fruit

Meat, Fish and Poultry

- Whole cuts of meat or poultry (pork chops, steak)
- Meat with casing still on (sausage / bratwurst)
- Hard dry pieces of meat
- Bacon

Dairy

- Cheese slices or cubes

Simple recipes

Cheesy Pasta (makes 8 servings - can be frozen)

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 450g tomato paste OR bottled tomato sauce
- 1 pint of water
- 200g frozen peas
- 500g pack of macaroni
- 50g (2 oz) grated Cheddar cheese

Heat olive oil and sauté onion for about 5 minutes. Add salt, pepper, tomato paste and water; bring mixture to a boil and add peas; reduce heat and simmer for about 30 minutes

Add pasta to a pot of boiling water and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or as per packet instructions until soft and then drain

Stir cooked pasta and cheese into tomato mixture. Cover pan and turn off heat. Let stand for 10 minutes.

Banana Cream (makes 4 servings)

- 280ml whipping cream
- 3 ripe bananas
- 2 heaped tablespoons caster sugar
- Rind (grated) and juice of 1 lemon

Whisk the cream until thick

Peel the bananas and mash with the sugar, lemon rind and juice

Add the mashed banana mixture to the cream and stir together. Chill before serving.

Parmesan and Garlic Risotto (makes 4 servings)

- 40g butter
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Dried rosemary, chopped
- 225g risotto rice (Arborio)
- 150g frozen peas
- 800ml vegetable/chicken stock
- 50g grated parmesan cheese

Heat oven to 150C/fan 130C/gas 2

Melt butter and fry garlic and rosemary for 2 minutes

Add rice and cook for 1-2 minutes, coating it in the butter mixture

Add stock and bring to the boil

Simmer for 35 minutes, stirring continuously and then add frozen peas.

Simmer for a further 5 minutes or until the rice is soft

Serve with parmesan cheese.

Chicken and Vegetable Casserole (makes 4 servings)

- 400g chicken pieces
- 2 cup peeled carrots/parsnips
- 4 tablespoons gravy
- 1/2 cup stock

- Cheese or cream to finish
- Lightly fry chicken pieces
- Add stock, gravy and chopped vegetables
- Simmer for 1-2 hours until the chicken and vegetables are very soft and easy to mash
- Serve with mashed potato, cheese or cream.

Swallowing safety

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

- Sit upright, in a chair if possible, whilst you eat and drink and for at least half an hour afterwards
- You should be 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 time in between mouthfuls
- Take sips of fluid every three to four mouthfuls if needed
- 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
- Rinse your mouth with warm salt water at the end of a meal to clean out the mouth
- Make mealtimes a pleasant and relaxed experience

If you already have exercises and specific advice from your Speech and Language Therapist please follow these as prescribed.

If you require any further information about eating and drinking safely contact the Speech and Language Therapy Department.

Managing Constipation

Constipation can reduce appetite and even cause nausea and vomiting . Therefore it is important that your bowels are opening regularly.

For healthy and regular bowels:

- Eat regularly to help stimulate the transit of food
- Include some high fibre foods each day
High fibre cereal such as porridge or Weetabix®, suitable fruit and vegetables, wholegrain rice and pasta prepared as advised in savoury meals section.
- Keep hydrated - aim for three to four pints (eight to ten cups) of fluid per day
- Move around as much as possible (walking, standing and light movement out of bed or chair will help to stimulate bowels)
- Ask your GP to prescribe a laxative if constipation is an issue and take as directed

Cookbooks and pre-prepared meals

Brenda's Easy-To-Swallow cookbook

Published by Consilience Media, in association with the Mouth Cancer Foundation. November 2009

Available at: www.mouthcancerfoundation.org

Soft Foods for Easier Eating—Cookbook

Easy-to-follow recipes for people who have chewing and swallowing difficulties,

by Sandra Woodruff, RD and Leah Gilbert-Henderson

Square One Publishers (2007). ISBN 0757002900

www.dysphagia-diet.com

The I-Can't-Chew Cookbook: Delicious **Soft Diet** Recipes for People with Chewing, Swallowing, and Dry Mouth Disorders

By J. Randy Wilson. Hunter House (2003).

ISBN 0897934008

Hamlyn All Colour 200 Slow Cooker Recipes

Hamlyn Hamlyn - Octopus Publishing Group (2009)

ISBN 0600620697

Useful references

British Dietetics Association

<https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home> **Cancer Research UK**

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/physically/diet-problems/managing/soft-diet>

Freephone: 0808 800 4040 (9am - 5pm)

Mouth Cancer foundation

www.mouthcancerfoundation.org/get-info/patients-guide

www.rdoc.org.uk/

Free helpline: 01924 950 950

Email: info@mouthcancerfoundation.org

Macmillan

www.macmillan.org.uk

Free call: 0808 808 0000 (Mon-Fri 9am-8pm)

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

<https://www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/your-care/royal-marsden-help-centre/patient-information-booklets>

Freephone: 0800 783 7176

Contact us

Head and Neck Dietitians

The Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

St George's Healthcare NHS Trust

Blackshaw Road

London

SW17 0QT

Tel. 020 8725 0518

Fax. 020 8725 1951

Macmillan Head & Neck Clinical Nurse Specialist

Tel. 020 8725 3263

Speech & Language Therapists

Tel. 020 8725 1163

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 9.30am and 4.30pm, 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



Reference: NDI_YFMM_01 **Published:** June 2018 **Review date:** June 2020