

Making the most of your pureed meals

Head & Neck Dietitians

This booklet has been designed for people who are having difficulty chewing or swallowing and have been advised to have a pureed 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 pureed meals.

What are pureed meals?

Pureed food is smooth and has no lumps. Most food can be pureed by blending it with gravy, sauces, milk or water. By adding more or less liquid you can change the consistency of the puree. Note: Baby foods are NOT suitable for people on a pureed diet because they are nutritionally inadequate for adults.

How to puree food

Most foods can be made into a pureed consistency using a liquidiser, food processor or a hand-held blender and a sieve to push food through to remove pips, lumps, and skins. Prepare your food as normal and then cut into small pieces and add small amounts of food at a time to the blender and blend until all the lumps are removed. Add fluids (such as milk, oil, butter, cream, sauce, gravy or juice) to form a smooth consistency and use a sieve to remove any remaining pips, lumps or skins. Try not to blend foods with water only as this will increase the volume of your meal without providing any additional calories or protein. You may need to reheat the meal when you have finished preparing it as your food may have cooled down during the blending process.

Making the most of your meals

This advice is suitable if you're 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. The extras may need to be added before the pureeing process or stirred in to achieve a smooth consistency.

- 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 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.

Nourishing Drinks

You may have had 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 Bottle®, 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 soft/spreadable cheese to suitable pureed meals. Be aware that some hard cheeses may make the meal too stringy
- Add cream, evaporated milk, condensed milk in teas/coffees and breakfast cereals.
- Add a knob of butter or your favourite oils to pureed meals
- Have plenty of butter/jam, honey, soft cheese, and/or smooth nut pastes on blended bread or blended toasted sandwiches
- Add cream, honey and/or jam to yoghurts, cereals and rice puddings.

Ensure all extras are added before the pureeing process or stirred to achieve a smooth consistency.

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

Trifle with seedless fruit	Mashed banana with cream and honey then blended to pureed consistency
Thick or set yoghurt like Greek style (avoid those with large fruit pieces). Choose high protein/full fat versions.	Tinned or stewed fruit liquidised with fruit juice, syrup, cream, milk, yoghurt, evaporated or condensed milk.
Egg custard tart with pastry removed	Cheesecake with biscuit base removed
Sponge cake soaked in fruit juice, evaporated milk and cream	Rice pudding, semolina, tapioca, sago (blended until smooth), custard.
Angel Delight®, Mousse, Crème caramel, fromage frais	Cook apples, pears and plums and remove cores, skins, stones and pips before pureeing
Ice-cream, sorbet, blancmange, jelly, tiramisu	Biscuits soaked in tea, hot chocolate or milk

Ensure all of the following are blended to pureed consistency. Always choose full fat milk products. Extra liquids may be needed to ensure pureed consistency.

Breakfast ideas

- Strained porridge or ready brek® with pureed fruit, honey or syrup
- Weetabix soaked in plenty of hot or cold milk - blend to achieve a pureed consistency
- Smooth yoghurt (avoid ones with fruit pieces) try Greek yoghurt, thick and creamy yoghurt or fromage frais - dilute with milk or cream to ensure correct pureed consistency.
- Banana, grated apple or pears pureed with fortified milk or cream
- Milk pudding or rice pudding with jam or honey blended to a pureed consistency
- Scrambled or poached eggs pureed with milk and cheese
- Bread (crusts removed) soaked in tinned or chopped tomatoes and blended until smooth

Lunch and Dinner Ideas

Soup

- Any soup can be liquidised or strained:
- Add cream, cheese, potato, ham or minced meat before liquidising
- Make up condensed and packet soups with fortified milk or cream
- Thicken with bread (no crusts) or mashed potato

Pasta and Rice

- Cook pasta or rice until very soft
- Add sauces (tomato or cream) plus extra milk, cheese or cream, then blend well until smooth

Ideas:

- ◆ *Spaghetti Bolognese*
- ◆ *Macaroni and cheese or lasagne*
- ◆ *Risotto with mixed vegetables*
- ◆ *Rice with curry*

Vegetables

- Any fresh, tinned or frozen vegetables can be used
- Pulses puree well (lentils, kidney beans, chick peas, butter beans, baked beans)
- Avoid fibrous vegetables like celery and cabbage
- Peel and cut into small pieces avoiding seeds and skins
- Steam or boil. This can be done in a saucepan or in the microwave
- Add butter / margarine, grated cheese, milk, cream, herbs
- Drain off water then puree in blender until smooth

Potato

- Potato can be easily mashed then liquidised to a smooth puree.
- Cook thoroughly then mash with margarine, fortified milk or grated cheese
- Add to blender or food processor

- Mix in more milk to make smooth and reduce lumps
- Alternatively instant potato can be used and easily made up to a puree consistency.

Meat or poultry

- All types of meat and poultry can be pureed.
- Cook until soft and remove skins, bones, fat or gristle
- Blend meat on its own to make a paste
- Add sauce, curry, chutney, gravy or stock and blend to pureed consistency

Extra Ideas:

- ◆ *Chicken with gravy or mustard*
- ◆ *Casseroled pork/ beef in gravy*
- ◆ *Pork pureed with apple sauce*

Eggs - Scrambled or poached eggs

- Flavour with sauces, herbs or pepper
- Add cheese, margarine, milk or cream and blend to pureed consistency

Fish

- Fresh, frozen or tinned fish can all be pureed.
- Cook until flaky, remove bones and skin, add sauces and then blend into puree

Extra Ideas:

- ◆ *Poached white fish with cheese sauce or parsley sauce*
- ◆ *Fish with soup as a sauce*
- ◆ *Fisherman's pie*
- ◆ *Tinned salmon with mayonnaise and lemon juice*
- ◆ *Tinned mackerel with tomato sauce*

Please note these will need to be blended to pureed consistency

Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit juice • Strained porridge or ready brek® with pureed fruit, honey or syrup • Pureed fruit and yoghurt
Mid-morning snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milky coffee or tea with dunked biscuits
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pureed fish with a selection of pureed vegetables and potatoes
Mid-afternoon snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nourishing drink • Pureed banana with custard
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick, smooth fortified soup • Pureed spaghetti Bolognese
Before Bed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milky hot nourishing drink

Simple Recipes

High Energy Porridge

- 4 tablespoons of cooked porridge
- 6 tablespoons of hot milk
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1 tablespoon of full fat cream

Puree all ingredients together or push through a sieve. Add hot milk to make a smooth consistency.

Fortified High Protein Soup

- 1/3 pint (200ml) creamy canned soup
- 2 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder OR Complan®/ Meritene®
- 2 tablespoons of full fat cream

Stir in the milk powder or Complan/ Meritene and heat. Add cream before serving.

Meat and Vegetables Soup

- Handful of cooked meat or chicken pieces
- 1 cup of cooked vegetables
- 4 tablespoons of gravy powder
- 1/2 cup of stock
- Cheese or cream to finish

Liquidise together well. Heat on the stove or microwave, then serve with cheese or cream.

Nourishing Milk Pudding

- 4 tablespoons of milk pudding or custard
- 4 tablespoons of hot milk
- 1 tablespoon of skimmed milk powder
- 1 tablespoon of full fat cream
- 1 tablespoon of seedless jam OR 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Liquidise together or push through a sieve. Warm in the microwave.

High Calorie Fruit Fool

- Handful (1 cup) of soft fruit (e.g. tinned peaches, pears, banana)
- 4 tablespoons of full fat cream or evaporated milk
- 1 dessert spoon of sugar

Liquidise together or push through a sieve. Serve hot or cold.

Luxury Hot Chocolate

1 cup of hot full fat milk

A few pieces of plain chocolate melted into milk

1 teaspoon of sugar

A dash of full fat cream. Mix together and drink while warm.

Making Pureed Meals Appealing

Attractive looking food can help stimulate appetite. Pureed food lacks texture and can look bland and uninteresting, but there are ways to improve this.

Presentation

- Puree different foods separately, i.e. vegetables and pasta
- Serve meals in a bowl rather than on a plate
- Garnishes liven up meals—sprinkle paprika, ground pepper or herbs

Flavour

- Vary the flavours of meals
- Add herbs, spices, lemon juice or sauces such as soy, curry sauce, ketchup or mint sauce

Colour

- Choose foods with a variety of colours to make meals look more interesting
- Try combining bright coloured vegetables with more pale foods such as creamed potato and cheese

Temperature

- Reheat to the right temperature to increase palatability

Desserts

- Serve desserts in individual glasses and add sauces, cream or dust with chocolate or icing sugar

Food Moulds

- Food moulds allow pureed food which has been thickened to be moulded back to retain their 'normal' food appearance for presentation on a plate
- Vegetables, fruit, fish etc. can be moulded separately and arranged to look more palatable, see: <https://www.pureefoodmolds.com/en/>

Managing Constipation

- Constipation can be a problem for many people following a pureed diet due to the change in diet, or reduction in fibre.
- Many pain control medications can also cause bowel habits to change.

For healthy and regular bowels:

- Aim for a regular eating pattern. Regular meals and snacks keep your gastrointestinal tract 'healthy' and stimulate the transit of food and wastes
- Include some high fibre foods each day
 - Oats, or other cereals (even pureed are good)
 - Digestive biscuits 'dunked' in hot drinks until soft
 - Fruit and vegetables (still beneficial if peeled and pureed)
- Stay well hydrated—aiming for 3 - 4 pints (8 - 10 cups) of total fluid per day (count all drinks)
- Move around daily (walking, standing and light movement out of bed or chair will help to stimulate bowels)
- Ask your GP to prescribe a laxative and take as directed

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
- Takes 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.

Cookbooks and useful references

Brenda's Easy-To-Swallow cookbook

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

Available at: www.mouthcancerfoundation.org

Wiltshire Farm Foods

Pureed meals delivered to your door

www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com

Freephone: 0800 077 3100

British Dietetics Association

www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/index.html

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

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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



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