

Making the most of your vegetarian pureed meals

This booklet has been designed for people who are vegetarian and 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. 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 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. 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-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 one 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, spreadable 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®	Cookapples, 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 gravy or tinned or chopped tomatoes and blended until smooth

Savoury Food Ideas

Pasta and Rice

- Thoroughly cook pasta or rice until very soft
- Blend until the consistency is smooth. Add cream or sauces to achieve correct consistency.

Potato

- Well cooked potatoes can be easily mashed or liquidised to a smooth puree
- Mash with butter, margarine, enriched milk (page 8), grated cheese or gravy to add more energy (calories)

Vegetables

- Tinned, frozen or fresh vegetables are all high in micronutrients and are suitable in pureed form
- Peel, cut into small pieces and remove seeds and skins then steam, boil or microwave well
- Drain off water and then blend with added butter/ margarine, cheese, milk, cream or herbs until smooth
- Fibrous vegetables like celery and cabbage may be more difficult to puree
- Pureed avocado is tasty and high in energy

Soups

- Choose creamy commercial soups as they will be higher in energy - these can be blended further to remove lumps
- Add cream, enriched milk (page 8), cheese, potato, beans, pumpkin, tofu, minced Quorn®, or mushrooms to add energy (calories) and blend
- Thicken soup with bread (no crusts), mashed potato, pureed beans or lentils rice

Vegetarian Protein Foods

Protein is important for healing, repair and immune function and, when recovering from illness or surgery, the body needs more protein. It is possible to meet protein needs without eating meat,

fish and chicken but a little more attention needs to be paid to ensure than you receive the right amount. Try to choose some high protein foods at each mealtime

Vegetarian food rich in protein include:

- Cheese (all types), milk and dairy foods
- Eggs
- Beans, lentils, chickpeas, bean paste, dahl
- Hummus, Pesto, Nut pastes
- Quorn® mince, Quorn® sausages, Tofu
- Soya milk, soya yoghurt (high protein versions)
- Peanut and other nut butters

To achieve a puree consistency:

- Cook until soft as per cooking instructions
- Add sauce, vegetable broth, chutney, gravy or stock to help create a smooth texture
- Some vegetarian meat products may require further sieving after pureeing to remove any remaining fibrous or stringy bits

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
Mod-morning snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milky coffee or tea with dunked biscuits
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eggs and beans 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 made with Quorn® mince
Before Bed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milky hot nourishing drink

Sample 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 Complian®/ Meritene®
- 2 tablespoons of full fat cream

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

Spiced Carrot and Lentil Soup

- 2 teaspoons of cumin powder
- A pinch of chilli powder
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 600g of peeled and cooked carrots
- 140g of cooked split red lentils
- 1L of hot vegetable stock
- 125ml of full fat milk or coconut milk
- Cheese or cream to finish

Liquidise all ingredients together and strain the mixture through a sieve. Heat on the hob or in a microwave and serve.

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 (eg 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, beans 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 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 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

<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

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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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