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# Minced and Moist

## Information for patients with dysphagia and their carers

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having a minced and moist 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 dysphagia?

Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing difficulties. Some people with dysphagia have problems swallowing certain foods or liquids, while others can't swallow at all. Your speech and language therapist has recommended changing the consistency of your liquids to make them safer to swallow.

### What is minced and moist food?

Minced and moist food:

- Can be eaten with a fork or spoon
- Could be eaten with chopsticks in some cases if the individual has very good hand control
- Can be scooped and shaped e.g., into a ball shape, on a plate
- Soft and moist with no separate thin liquid
- Small lumps visible within the food should be no larger than 4mm (small enough to fit between fork prongs)
- Lumps are easy to squash with tongue
- Biting is not required with a minced and moist food
- Minimal chewing is required
- Tongue force alone can be used to break soft small particles in this texture
- Tongue force is required to move the food in the mouth.

If you're on a minced and moist diet, **you should not eat:**

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

While on a minced and moist diet, you may find it hard to eat enough to maintain your weight. Ask a dietician for advice or speak to your GP if you are losing weight without meaning to.

# How do I swallow minced and moist 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 mealtime. 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 to get the nutrients you need
- Try to have a variety of meals and snacks each day
- 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.

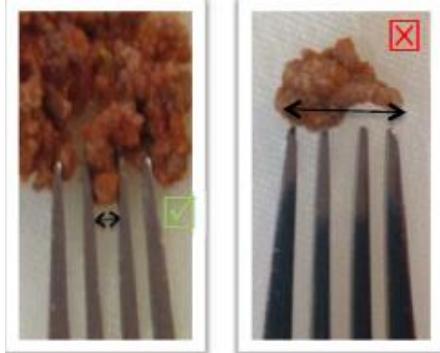
## What should I do if I'm not sure if a food fits the criteria?

We have given you some examples of foods that would fit the criteria, but if you are not sure there are a few tests you could try at home:

You can do a few simple tests to see if a food meets the 'minced and moist' criteria.

- **Fork test** - food can be easily mashed with minimal pressure from a fork. When a fork is pressed into food it should separate easily and come through the fork prongs. You should be able to scoop the food into a small pile on the fork and it shouldn't completely fall through the prongs.
- **Spoon test** - food should hold its shape on the spoon. The full spoonful should fall off the spoon if it is tilted or turned sideways. Food should only spread very slightly when on a plate.
- **Chopstick test** - chopsticks can scoop or hold this texture if the person has very good hand control when using chopsticks.
- **Finger test** - you should be able to hold this food in your fingers: it should be small, soft, and smooth with round pieces. It should feel moist and leave your fingers wet.

This should be the size of your food particles!



These size food particles are too big



## Food examples

### Breads and cereals - for fibre and energy

Food	Choose	Avoid
<b>Breakfast cereals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Porridge or instant oats, that is smooth with soft lumps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muesli or toasted cereals</li> <li>Cereals with clusters.</li> <li>Cereals containing dried fruit, nuts, seeds or coconut</li> <li>Any excess milk or fluid</li> </ul>
<b>Bread</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No bread unless it is assessed as suitable by your speech and language therapist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All types of bread</li> <li>Pizza</li> </ul>
<b>Pasta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well cooked, mashed pasta with plenty of thick sauce.</li> <li>Shell or tube pasta, ravioli or tortellini with meat or cheese filling and sauce, mashed</li> <li>Macaroni cheese, mashed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Al dente/undercooked pasta</li> <li>Pasta which has not been mashed</li> </ul>
<b>Rice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rice pudding, creamed rice or semolina</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual grains of rice</li> <li>Fried or steamed rice which can be sticky and dry.</li> </ul>
<b>Potatoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steamed or soft-boiled potatoes with all skin removed, cooked thoroughly and mashed with butter/margarine, cheese, milk or cream</li> <li>Instant mashed potato</li> <li>Skinless jacket potato with moist fillings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jacket potato skin.</li> <li>Crispy potatoes such as hash browns, fries, fried potatoes or wedges</li> <li>Mash potato with hard lumps</li> </ul>
<b>Cakes and pastries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biscuits soaked in tea, hot chocolate or milk until very soft and mashed</li> <li>Soft moist cake, mashed, with plenty of custard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cakes with dried fruit or nuts</li> <li>Crackers</li> <li>Danish pastries</li> <li>Flapjacks</li> <li>Dry biscuits</li> </ul>

## Meat, fish and alternatives – for protein

Food	Choose	Avoid
Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well cooked meat with skin, bones, fat and gristle <u>removed</u> and very thick, smooth, non-pouring sauce or gravy added to moisten.</li> <li>Pieces of meat should be no bigger than 4mm lump size</li> <li>Moist mince and tomato Bolognese sauce</li> <li>Shepherd's or cottage pie, extra gravy for moisture</li> <li>Casseroled or slow cooked meat or chicken in very thick, smooth gravy</li> <li><b>If your meat cannot be finely minced or mashed with lumps no larger than 4mm it should be pureed</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gristly, stringy or chewy meat</li> <li>Tough or dry meat</li> <li>Whole cuts of meat or poultry e.g., pork chops or steak</li> <li>Bacon</li> <li>Dry casserole or hard dry pieces of minced meat</li> </ul>
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fish must be finely mashed in extremely thick, smooth, non-pouring sauces or gravy</li> <li>Lumps must be no bigger than 4mm</li> <li>Fresh, frozen or tinned fish with all skin and bones removed, soft enough to break into small pieces with a fork</li> <li>Poached white fish with cheese or parsley sauce</li> <li>Fish pie</li> <li>Tinned fish with mayonnaise</li> <li><b>If your fish cannot be finely mashed with lumps no larger than 4mm it should be pureed</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fish with bones</li> </ul>
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrambled, boiled or poached eggs mashed</li> <li>Omelette with added cheese, cream or sauces mashed</li> <li>Quiche or frittata with vegetables and crust removed</li> <li>Soufflé</li> </ul>	
Beans, pulses, lentils, nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canned baked beans – must be skinless</li> <li>Lentils, chickpeas, bean pate or dahl, cooked or soaked until mashable. These might need blending.</li> <li>Soya beans, miso soup and tofu</li> <li>Smooth peanut butter</li> <li>Nut pastes like tahini (sesame paste) humus or pesto</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nuts</li> <li>Crunchy peanut butter</li> <li>The skin of beans and pulses</li> </ul>

## Dairy foods – for protein and calcium

Food	Choose	Avoid
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check with your clinician about the thickness of milk before consuming any variety of milk.</li> <li>Milkshakes or flavoured milks</li> <li>Fruit smoothies (well blended)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruit smoothies with lumps</li> </ul>
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheese sauces</li> <li>Soft cheeses such as cottage cheese and ricotta</li> <li>Cheese soufflé</li> <li>Grated cheese can be added to most savoury dishes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard cheese</li> <li>Cheese with fruit or nuts</li> <li>Cheese blocks or cubes</li> </ul>
Yoghurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any smooth yoghurt</li> <li>Greek yoghurt</li> <li>Frozen yoghurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yoghurts with dried fruit or nuts</li> <li>Yoghurt topped with granola or dry oats</li> </ul>
Milk based desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cream, custard</li> <li>Smooth cheesecake with biscuit base removed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check with your clinician around transitional foods: mousse, cream caramel, ice cream, sorbet, jelly.</li> </ul>

## Fruits and vegetables – for vitamins, minerals and fibre

Food	Choose	Avoid
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh or tinned fruit which are mashable and soft</li> <li>Fruit smoothies - well blended</li> <li>Fruit juice (check with your clinician about consistency)</li> <li>Poached fruits, mashed</li> <li>Stewed fruits</li> <li>Fruits should be served mashed and excess juice drained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard fruits such as apple or melon</li> <li>Fruit with skin e.g., grapes</li> <li>Fruits with seeds and pips e.g., strawberries</li> <li>Dried fruit</li> <li>Check with your clinician about transitional foods such as watermelon</li> </ul>
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh, tinned or frozen vegetables peeled and well cooked until soft (boiled, steamed, microwaved or roasted) and mashed</li> <li>Mashed pulses</li> <li>Mixed vegetable mashes such as carrot and swede or sweet potato and parsnip</li> <li>Vegetables should be mashed and any excess liquid should be drained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raw vegetables or floppy foods (lettuce, cucumber, baby spinach)</li> <li>Vegetable skins</li> <li>Whole corn kernels</li> <li>Stringy or rubbery, non-tender vegetables (Brussels sprouts, asparagus, celery)</li> <li>Crispy vegetables (fried potatoes, potato skins)</li> </ul>

## Sample meal plan

### 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 (thickened as recommended)
- Yoghurt and mashed banana (soy yoghurt for a non-dairy alternative)

### Lunch

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

### Mid-afternoon

- Nourishing drink (see below)
- Biscuits softened in hot tea, coffee or hot chocolate and mashed

### Evening meal

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

### Before bed

- Soft, mashed, tinned or stewed fruit with custard.

## How can I make my soft and bite sized meals look good?

- Food that looks good helps 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 foods like creamed potato or cheese to make meals look good
- Serve food at **the right temperature** to make sure it tastes good, reheat after mashing 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 and **ready-to-eat meals** can be reheated according to instructions, then blended or mashed. You might need to add fluid to make sure they are smooth. If you have a freezer you might like to portion and freeze food by:

- Making up 4-6 servings of a dish and dividing it into portions
- Cooling the food after cooking
- Putting each portion into clean, empty yoghurt pots, margarine tubs or plastic containers
- Labelling and dating containers

- Freezing immediately

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

**Never refreeze 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, by:

- Adding grated cheese, butter or margarine, salad dressings, sauce, salad cream, mayonnaise or oil to vegetables.
- Adding yoghurt, jam, cream or honey to breakfast cereals.
- Adding yoghurt, cheese, margarine or butter, milk or cream to sauces.
- Adding one tablespoon of milk powder or two tablespoons of cream to soups
- Adding grated cheese, cream, margarine or butter to mashed potato.
- Adding jam, honey, syrup 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
- Try to eat puddings often to add variety and calories.

## Managing constipation

Constipation can be a problem for some people following a soft and bite sized 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

The following can be made at home:

- **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.

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

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 Fibre, Fortisip Compact Protein, Abbott Ensure, Nutricia Scandishake

**If you are taking thickened fluids remember to thicken these drinks as usual – but make sure they are thickened to the correct consistency as they may already be thicker than usual.**

## Useful sources of information

Wiltshire Farm Foods

Soft and pureed meals delivered to your door

[www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com](http://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com)

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

British Dietetics Association

[www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts)

Age UK Advice

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Freephone: 0800 169 6565

Dysphagia Cafe

<http://www.dysphagiacafe.com>

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your speech and language therapy team (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm):

Acute/ General medical speech and language therapy: 020 8725 3007

Adult neurology speech and language therapy: 020 8725 4492

Stroke speech and language therapy: 020 8725 2001

Head and neck speech and language therapy: 020 8725 1163

Community Neuro-therapy speech and language therapy: 020 8812 4060

Queen Mary's Hospital:

Mary Seacole speech and language therapy: 020 8487 6146

Bryson white rehabilitation speech and language therapy: 020 8487 6170

Wolfson Neurorehabilitation:

Queen Mary's Hospital 020 8487 6142

St George's Hospital 020 8266 6549

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://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 wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto: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](http://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

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

