

Regular *Easy to Chew*

Information for patients with dysphagia and for their carers

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having an Easy to Chew 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 easy to chew food?

Easy chew food:

- Normal, everyday foods of soft/tender texture
- Any method may be used to eat these foods (e.g., fingers, fork, spoon, chopsticks etc.)
- Food piece size is not restricted in size. They can be smaller or bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm
- **Do not eat foods that are** hard, tough, chewy, fibrous or which have stringy textures, pips/seeds, bones or gristle
- You should be able to 'bite off' pieces of soft and tender food, so that they are safe to swallow without tiring easily
- You should be able to remove from your mouth bone, gristle or other hard pieces that cannot be swallowed safely without help or direction from others.

Why is this food texture level used for adults?

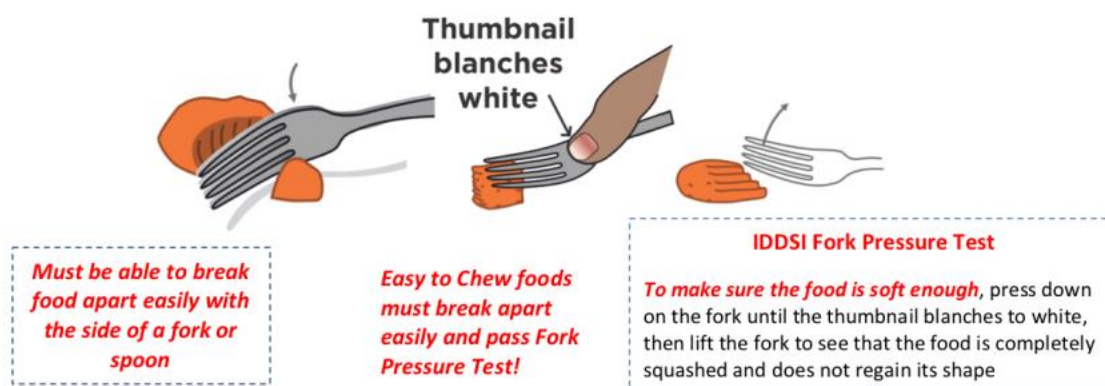
- Level 7 regular easy to chew food may be used if you have strong enough chewing ability to break down soft/tender foods into pieces without help, if you have no increased risk of choking and do not have swallowing problems.
- This texture may be right for you if you usually choose to eat soft and tender food without tiring easily.
- It may also be a good choice if you have been sick and are recovering strength.
- Your clinician might recommend this texture if they are teaching you advanced chewing skills.
- Serve food as normal.
- If you notice the food pieces are not being chewed well enough, please contact your clinician to make sure you are on the correct food texture. See local guidelines for what to do in case of choking.

Who should not have this texture level?



- This level is not intended for people where there is an identified increased risk of choking.
- People who are unsafe to eat without supervision are not considered suitable for this texture level.
- People can be unsafe to eat without supervision because of chewing and swallowing problems and/or unsafe mealtime behaviours.
- Examples of unsafe mealtime behaviours include not chewing very much, putting too much food into the mouth, eating too fast or swallowing large mouthfuls of food.
- Always consult with your healthcare professional for specific advice for your needs, requests and requirements for supervision.
- Where mealtime supervision is needed, this level should only be used under the strict recommendation and written guidance of a qualified health professional.









How do I test my food to make sure it is Level 7 Regular Easy to Chew?


- Foods should be able to be cut or broken apart with the side of a fork or spoon.
- It is then safest to test Regular Easy to Chew food using the IDDSI Fork Pressure test.



Food Examples

| | Avoid | Consider |
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|  | Dry, crumbly, crispy foods Crackers, biscuits, pie crusts, crumble, bread crusts, crisps, flaky pastry, dry cakes, dry cereal (cornflakes), crackling, crispy bacon. | Dipping tea in tea/coffee, softening with warm custard etc. (See mixed consistencies). |
|  | Hard, crunchy foods Boiled sweets, nuts, hard toffees, seeds, crackling, crusty roll, raw apple, hard /raw vegetables, corn chips, crisps. Stir fry vegetables may be too firm. | Steamed or boiled vegetables until tender. |

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|  | <p>Tough, chewy foods Steak, bacon, harder vegetables, jelly sweets, pineapple.</p> | <p>Cook until tender. If you cannot serve soft and tender, serve as minced and moist.</p> |
|  | <p>Foods with a skin or outer shell Peas, grapes, tomatoes, oranges, sausages, beans e.g., broad, baked, soya, black eye.</p> | <p>Removing outer skin/shell if you can.</p> |
|  | <p>Stringy fibrous foods Pineapple, rhubarb, runner beans, celery, lettuce.</p> | |
|  | <p>Pips, seeds, pith/inside skin, grains and 'bitty' foods Grapes, fruit skins, rice, husks, e.g., sweetcorn, popcorn, apple seeds, pumpkin seeds, white of orange.</p> | |
|  | <p>Skin, bone or gristle Chicken bones, fish bones, other bones, meat with gristle.</p> | <p>Removing skin, bone, gristle and cutting up prior to serving. Consider serving with sauce to moisten.</p> |
|  | <p>Round or long shaped foods Sausages, grapes, sweets. Hard chunks e.g., pieces of apple.</p> | <p>Fruit that is soft enough to break into small pieces with side of a fork. Remove fibrous parts of fruit.</p> |
|  | <p>Mixed Consistencies Cereals that don't blend with milk e.g., muesli, mince with thin gravy, soup with lumps, fruit salad with juice. Juicy food where juice separates in the mouth e.g., melon, orange.</p> | <p>Drain any excess liquid from food. Avoid foods that produce liquid once bitten.</p> |
|  | <p>Floppy Foods Salad, e.g., lettuce, thinly sliced cucumber, spinach.</p> | |

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|  | <p>Sticky Foods Marshmallows, soft toffees, nut butter, overcooked porridge, sticky rice cakes, cheese chunks, sticky mashed potato, dried fruits, edible gelatine, Konjac containing jelly.</p> | |
|  | <p>Slippery Foods Jelly, smoked salmon.</p> | |
|  | <p>Bread <i>Treating Speech Therapist to please fill in bread recommendations:</i></p> | |

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

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

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

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (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.



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