

Soft and Bite-sized Diet (Level 6)

Speech and Language Therapy Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

Your Speech and Language Therapist has recommended that a “soft and bite-sized diet” may help you with your swallowing. This leaflet gives information describing the texture of soft and bite-sized food, suggestions of foods you could eat and advice on how to swallow safely.

What is a soft and bite-sized diet?

Soft and bite-sized food is:

- Soft, tender and moist throughout.
- Should have bite-sized pieces no bigger than 1.5cm x1.5cm (roughly the size of a thumbnail).
- Chewing is required before swallowing.
- Can be mashed or broken down with pressure from a fork or spoon.



Thumb nail blanched
to white



Sample squashes and does not
return to its original shape when pressure is
released

Soft and bite-sized food should not:

- Be hard, tough, chewy, stringy or dry.
- Have a hard or crunchy texture e.g. pieces of apple or cucumber.
- Have a skin, husk or outer shell e.g. peas, grapes or sweetcorn.
- Have a separate thin liquid. Liquids such as milk, sauces or gravy should be fully combined with food.
- Be a mixed consistency e.g. soups with bits e.g. minestrone or cereal in milk without excess liquid drained off.

Foods not suitable:

- Bread (unless assessed by your Speech and Language Therapist as appropriate).
- Stir fried or raw vegetables are too firm; opt for steamed or boiled vegetables to ensure that they are tender.
- Ice cream is not suitable for people having thickened fluids.

Example foods:

Suggested soft and bite sized meals. All meals must be cut into 1.5cm pieces.

Breakfast

- Porridge or Ready Brek.
- Weetabix soaked and combined with milk.
- Creamy scrambled egg or omelette.
- Well-chopped banana.

Main meals

- Steamed/poached fish in sauce/fish pie or tinned fish.
- Shepherd's pie/cottage pie/cheese and potato pie.
- Corned beef hash.
- Meat or vegetarian casseroles, stews and curries.
- Rice cooked in thick sauce e.g. risotto.
- Pasta cooked until very soft and cut up into a thick sauce
- Macaroni cheese.
- Lentil based dishes (well-cooked) such as dahl.
- Mashed potato or mashed jacket potato (no skin) served with egg or tuna mayonnaise.
- Mashed vegetables e.g. swede and carrot/sweet potato mash or mashed avocado.
- Soft boiled potatoes.
- Well cooked vegetables - carrots, swede, courgette or cauliflower cheese.
- Smooth, thick soups with no bits (if you are on thickened drinks, all soup should be the same consistency as your drinks).

Puddings

- Chopped banana or strawberries.
- Soft drained tinned fruit without pith e.g. peaches or pears, chopped to size.
- Stewed fruit e.g. apples/pears and custard.
- Fruit fools, smooth mousses, Angel Delight or crème caramel.

- Smooth custard.
- Rice pudding.
- Yoghurts (smooth, no bits).
- Sponge pudding served with cream or custard (chopped and mixed well).
- Ice cream/jelly (only if advised by your Speech and Language Therapist).

Safe swallowing guidelines

Strategies

- Take small sips/mouthfuls at a time.
- Make sure that after you swallow, your mouth is clear before taking the next mouthful.
- Clear any food residue from your mouth after a meal with oral care or sips of drink.

Posture

- Ensure your posture is good and sit as **upright** as possible.
- Ensure you remain upright for 30 minutes after eating.

Environment

- Eat in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Do not rush.
- Try not to talk while eating and drinking.
- Ensure you concentrate on swallowing.
- Meal timing may be important e.g. eating little and often.

Why is it important to follow Speech and Language Therapy advice?

Not following recommendations may place you at risk of choking or food “going down the wrong way” (aspiration).

This may cause a chest infection. You can discuss this with your speech and language therapist.

Signs of swallowing difficulties

- Coughing, choking or coughing fits when swallowing food or drink (this may be during or after meals).
- A 'gurgly' voice after eating or drinking.
- Food remaining in your mouth after a meal.
- Shortness of breath during or after eating.
- Food getting stuck in your throat.
- Feeling chesty or having regular chest infections.
- **Remember:** If you are sleepy or unwell, your swallow may be worse than usual.

If you notice any of the above, contact your GP or your Speech and Language Therapy team for advice:

Dudley Community Speech and Language Therapy: 01384 321600

Dudley Acute Speech and Language Therapy: 01384 456111 ext. 2439 or 4565

References

Image sourced from: <https://iddsi.org/resources/>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Speech and Language Therapy team on 01384 456111 ext. 2439 or 4565

(8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/speech-and-language-therapy/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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