

Eating well on a 'minced and moist' diet (IDDSI level 5)

Information for patients

This sheet answers common questions on how to manage a 'minced and moist' diet. If you would like further information, or have any worries, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

What is the IDDSI level 5 or minced and moist diet?

A minced and moist diet, also known as an International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) level 5 diet, is made up of foods that require little or no chewing. By following the advice on this sheet, you can help to increase the energy and protein in your diet. This can help build your strength, perform day-to-day tasks, and increase your body's ability to fight off infection.

Foods on this diet will include those that

- can be eaten with a fork or spoon
- can be scooped and shaped on a plate
- are soft and moist with no separate thin liquid
- have only small lumps visible within food (up to four millimetres)
- have lumps that are easy to squash with your tongue
- require no biting and minimal chewing
- squash and do not return to their original shape when pressure is released.

How to prepare minced and moist foods

Minced and moist foods can be prepared with a blender, food processor or just mashed with a fork. They must be very thick without lumps and can be served with a sauce or gravy.

You can use a fork with a space of four millimetres between fork prongs to determine whether minced pieces are the correct size.

Preparing foods individually and serving them separately on the plate can improve their taste and appearance.

- Avoid the following foods as they do not blend well:
- stringy, fibrous foods such as pineapple, celery, lettuce, or bacon
- vegetable and fruit skins
- crunchy foods such as toast, flaky pastry, hard biscuits, or crisps
- crumbly foods such as bread or pie crusts, or crumble tops

- hard foods like boiled or chewy sweets, toffees, nuts, and seeds
- food containing husks like sweetcorn, popcorn, or granary bread

Helpful tips to increase your food intake

Try to eat little and often, aim for three small meals and two to three snacks throughout the day. You may find it easier to sit upright whilst eating and have your main meal at the time of day when you feel your best.

It is helpful to keep a stock of foods that you find easy to eat at home. These might include rich and creamy foods that will help your nutritional and calorie intake such as creamy yoghurts, custard, or milk.

If you can, we recommend that you monitor your weight regularly, but this should be done no more than twice a week. If you are concerned about your weight or wellbeing, contact your GP or a member of the nutrition and dietetics team.

Increasing your calorie and protein intake

- Have a source of protein at least three times a day (minced meat, fish, eggs, cheese, Quorn, or crumbled tofu). Meats should be finely minced or puréed with a very thick, smooth sauce or gravy.
- Fry or add oil/butter/margarine to foods such as mashed potatoes, fish, and meat.
- Choose full fat foods: cream, milk, yoghurt, and full sugar foods. If you are diabetic, limit the number of sugary foods.
- Curries: add full fat coconut milk or full fat yoghurt.
- Mashed potatoes: add cream, grated cheese, cream cheese or mayonnaise.
- Sauces: add cheese, cream, milk powder, and butter/margarine.
- Soups: add grated cheese, cream, and milk powder.

Meal planning ideas

Breakfast

- Use full fat or fortified milk with cereals or milkshakes (cereals should be very thick and fully softened with all milk absorbed).
- Add full fat cream, honey, jam, pureed fruits, mashed banana, powdered nuts, or chocolate sauce to porridge or instant oats.
- Add cheese and cream to mashed scrambled eggs.
- Mash sausages after removing the skins.
- Soft mashed pancakes with jam, syrup, butter, smooth chocolate, or peanut butter spread.
- Very thick yoghurt with puréed fruit (no bits).
- Bread and milk simmered together until all the milk has soaked in. You can also add cream, sugar, or honey.

Main meal ideas

- Cottage or shepherd's pie with a rich and creamy mash.
- Mashed fish pie with finely minced chopped or mashed vegetables.

- Thick leek and potato soup without bits with cheese and cream.
- Well-cooked lentil-based dish (i.e., dahl).
- Thick blended stew or curry with couscous or rice.
- Soft blended mushroom risotto with cheese.

Pudding and sweet snack ideas

- Try to have a pudding once or twice a day.
- Puréed milky puddings like rice pudding, custard, semolina with condensed milk.
- Thick and creamy yoghurts with no bits.
- Trifle, mousse, or crème caramel.
- Smooth ice cream/kulfi. Ice cream is not suitable if you required thickened fluids as part of your diet.
- Non-fibrous puréed fruit such as banana, stewed apples, and pears, with the excess juices drained. Serve with whipped cream or custard.
- Sponges and crumbles can be softened and mashed with very thick cream or custard.

Ideas for drinks and hydration

You should try to drink between 1600ml and 2000ml or six-eight mugs of fluid per day to stay hydrated. Nourishing drinks are included in this and can be an easy way to increase your energy and protein intake if your appetite is poor.

Make sure all your drinks are thickened appropriately if you have been advised to by a speech and language therapist. Some examples of drinks that can help you drink enough fluids are:

- Milky drinks such as milky coffee, hot chocolate, Ovaltine, Horlicks, milkshakes, smoothies, yoghurt drinks like lassi made with full cream milk.
- Try to have one pint of full cream milk every day in drinks, soups, sauces, puddings and on cereal.
- Make fortified milk by whisking four tablespoons of dried milk powder to one pint of full fat milk. Drink cold or use to make a hot drink, on cereal or in cooking (soups and sauces).
- Avoid low calorie or low sugar foods and drinks.
- Take drinks with or after your meal as drinking before a meal can fill you up.

Over the counter supplements

Fortified drinks and protein powders can be bought over the counter from most chemists and supermarkets. Examples are Complan, Meritene or Nourishment with a range of savoury or sweet flavours. They can be made up with water but preferably choose milk. A dietitian can advise if this kind of supplement might be beneficial for you.

Note: If you have diabetes, you will need to continue to avoid sugary foods. You can, however, still increase your energy intake by using more fats or oils. Please speak to a dietitian for more information.

This advice should be followed alongside specific recommendations your speech and language therapists have made. If you notice coughing, choking, have food in your mouth after a meal, feel chesty or experience a “gurgly” voice after eating OR if you notice any changes in your swallowing, contact your speech and language therapist or GP as soon as possible.

Equally, if you notice weight loss or a deterioration in your appetite, it is very important to let your hospital doctor, GP or dietitian know.

More information

For more information about the nutrition and dietetics at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/therapyservices/nutrition-and-dietetics.

Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: rf.communications@nhs.net

Alternative formats

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