



Safer swallowing advice

Level 4 (pureed)

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Version 2

Name: _____

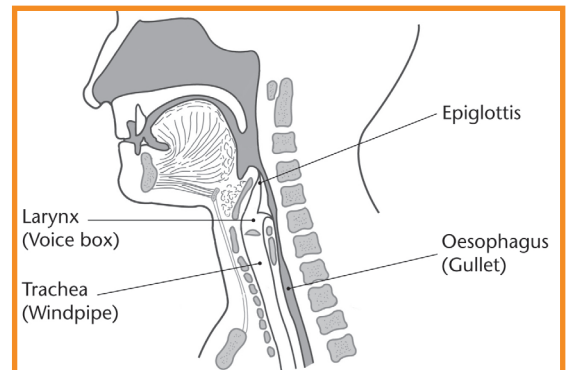
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> About this leaflet

As you are currently having difficulty swallowing, your speech and language therapist recommends that you change the consistency of your food.

The consistency that we recommend for you is:
Level 4 (pureed).

You should follow these recommendations at all times. Depending on the nature of your difficulties, your speech and language therapist may review these recommendations.



> What is a Level 4 (pureed) diet?

- ✓ Food has been pureed or has puree texture. It does not require chewing.
- ✓ It is a **thick** puree
 - Holds its shape on a plate or when scooped.
 - Falls from a spoon in a single spoonful when tilted.
 - It can be piped, layered or moulded.
- ✓ It is smooth throughout with no 'bits' (no lumps, fibres, bits of shell or skin, bits of husk, particles of gristle or bone etc.) You may need to use a sieve to achieve this.
- ✓ It is moist.
- ✓ Any fluid in or on the food is as thick as the puree itself.
- ✓ There are no loose fluids that have separated off.
- ✓ The texture is not sticky in the mouth.

Please note: In hospital this diet is called Level 4 (pureed).

If you are speaking to any staff (e.g. doctor or nurse) please refer to the diet Level 4 (pureed).

Preparing a Level 4 (pureed) diet

Most foods can be pureed in a blender using a little extra gravy or sauce. Cut the food up into small pieces before blending. The thickness of the food will depend on how much liquid is added. You may have to sieve the blended food to remove any 'bits'.

Check before serving and eating that:

- No hard pieces, crust or skin have formed during cooking, heating and standing.
- Fluid, gravy, sauce or custard in or on the food has not thinned out or separated off.
- Fork drip test – puree sits in a mound or pile above the fork. It does not dollop or drip continuously though the fork prongs. A small amount may flow through and form a tail.
- Spoon tilt test – puree holds its shape on the spoon and falls off fairly easily if the spoon is tilted or lightly flicked.

Foods that are pureed easily include:

- Eggs – dishes such as baked or scrambled eggs liquidise well.
- Cheese – this can be added to white sauce and served with liquidised poultry, fish or vegetables.
- Pasta – soft pasta dishes liquidise well if extra sauce is added. These sauces can be homemade, tinned or packet. e.g. lasagne, spaghetti bolognese, ravioli.
- Potatoes – these can be finely mashed with butter or margarine and milk to give a very soft, smooth consistency.

Foods which do not puree well include nuts, peas, sweetcorn, coconut, and some breakfast cereals.

Examples of suitable foods

Breakfast: Weetabix soaked in milk, mixed to a smooth consistency and sieved to remove any husks
Smooth yoghurt
Pureed fruit
Porridge made with milk and pureed

Lunch and Dinner: Smooth soup with no lumps
Creamed mashed potato
Pureed pasta in sauce
Pureed fish and sauce
Pureed mince and potatoes
Pureed macaroni cheese
Pureed shepherd's pie
Pureed beef stew
Pureed meat or chicken curry
Pureed chicken in a white wine sauce

Desserts: Pureed fruit e.g. apple, strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb
Smooth and creamy yoghurt
Smooth fromage frais
Pureed fruit trifle
Creamy custard
Pureed rice pudding
Pureed semolina
Mousse
Cheesecake and cream (no base)



Note: No ice cream or jelly if you need thickened fluids (because these can change to normal thickness in your mouth).

Points to remember for you or whoever is making your meals:

- Presentation of this diet is extremely important. It needs to look and smell as good as possible, and it helps if you know what flavour to expect. It doesn't look very attractive if foods are blended together.
- If the food does not look attractive it may affect how much you eat which could in time lead to unwanted weight loss.
- Remove tough skins and large seeds before blending.
- Puree small quantities at a time to avoid getting lumps.

Swallowing strategies

Here is some general advice which you may find useful. Please note not all of the items will necessarily apply to you.

Please concentrate on the ones which your speech and language therapist has ticked specifically for you.

- Sit in an upright position.
- Take your time.
- Take small mouthfuls.
- Try to eat in a quiet place, with few distractions.
- Only heat up small portions of food at a time so that food does not get cold.
- Smaller, more frequent meals may be less tiring.
- Keep your chin tucked down towards your chest when swallowing.
- Swallow several times after each mouthful.
- Take regular alternate sips of fluid when eating to help clear any residue that may be in your mouth or throat.
- Clear your throat regularly when eating and drinking, then swallow again.
- Cough after swallowing.
- Consult your GP or pharmacist about taking medication in syrup or soluble form.
Do not crush tablets or open up capsules without checking with your pharmacist that it is safe to do this.

Things to avoid:

- Foods that you find difficult.
- Taking very large mouthfuls.
- Tipping your head back.
- Eating and drinking when you feel short of breath.
- Talking while eating and drinking.
- Straws unless specifically recommended by your speech and language therapist.

Please refer to any additional information sheets your speech and language therapist has given you.

Your speech and language therapist also recommends the following advice specifically for your needs:

Fluids

You have been advised to drink **normal thin fluids**. If so, please ignore the section below.

You have been advised to drink _____ **thickened fluids** (please refer to the section below for information on how to thicken your fluids).

Drinks descriptor and level	
Level 1 (Slightly thick)	Leaves a coating on an empty glass and can be easily taken through a straw (if recommended).
Level 2 (Mildly thick)	Leaves a thin coat on the back of a spoon, can be drunk from a cup and easily taken through a straw (if recommended).
Level 3 (Moderately thick)	Leaves a thick coat on the back of a spoon, can be drunk from a cup, but too thick to be taken through a straw.
Level 4 (Extremely thick)	Unable to be drunk through a straw or a cup due to thickness. Needs to be taken from a spoon.

There are several different brands of 'thickening agent'. Please refer to the manufacturer's guidelines (usually on the side of the tin) for details of how much thickener needs to be added to your drink. Please check the fluid is the correct consistency before drinking.

Please note: Thickener and pre-thickened drinks are available on prescription from your GP.

Further information

Please contact the Speech and Language Therapy department if:

- You or your relatives have any worries or questions about your swallowing problem.
- Your swallow deteriorates.
- You develop new swallowing difficulties.

Your Speech and Language Therapy department phone number is **0141 951 5121**.

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