

# **Eating Well on a Fork Mashable Diet For People with Swallowing Problems**

**National Texture Descriptor 'E'  
Difficulties**

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Public/Dietsheets/Texture E fork mashable diet

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## Introduction

You may find that certain foods and drinks are less easy to chew and to swallow. This may cause you to cough or choke (when food or drink goes down the wrong way into your airway), which could be dangerous. It has been recommended that you follow a consistency modified diet.

You should be referred to a Speech and Language Therapist who will assess your ability to swallow and working together with the Dietitian, they will advise you on:

- The texture of foods best suited to your ability to swallow.
- The best sitting position, posture and techniques to make swallowing easier.
- An eating plan best suited to you, which takes account of your likes and dislikes and provides adequate nourishment and hydration.
- When to progress to the next food texture.
- Nutritional supplements and/or drink thickeners if these are needed.

## Notes:

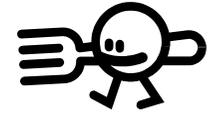
## Soaking Solution:

This is made by blending thickener with water, fruit juice, stock cubes, Oxo or Bovril. You can then use this to soak foods such as bread (no crusts), crackers, cake and biscuits. The food absorbs the solution and becomes soft without having to purée them.

## Summary:

- ◆ Only have food and drinks which are the correct texture and consistency.
- ◆ Choose a healthy balanced diet by using the Eatwell Guide to plan meals.
- ◆ Use food fortification to gain weight if you are underweight.
- ◆ Include good sources of fibre and drink 8-10 cups of fluid a day to prevent constipation.

## Fork Mashable Diets



A Fork Mashable diet is suitable if you have a mild chewing or swallowing difficulty.

Foods should be soft, tender and moist enough to be easily mashed with a fork into small pieces, at the point of serving or eating. It is **not** necessary to purée or sieve the foods.

Foods still require some chewing, but normal muscle strength and teeth are not necessary.

Examples of foods suitable for a Fork Mashable diet are:

- tender meat casseroles
- macaroni cheese
- sandwiches (no crusts) with soft, moist fillings
- sponge and custard.

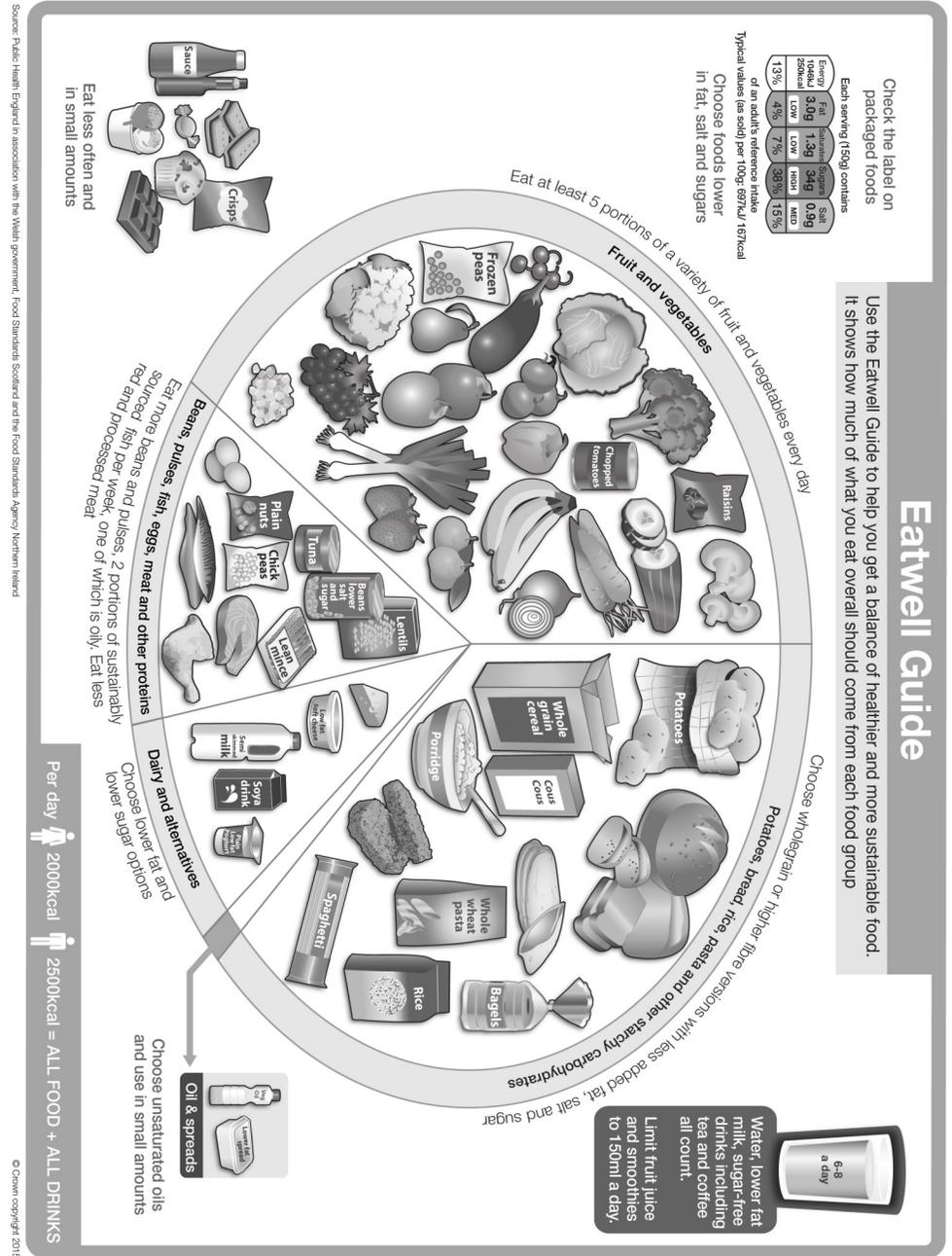
More ideas for foods suitable for a Fork Mashable diet are included later.

## Are there any foods I should avoid if I have a swallowing difficulty?

Some foods can increase your risk of choking and should be avoided even if your swallowing difficulty is only mild.

It is important that the following foods are avoided:

- **Stringy/fibrous foods**—pineapple, celery, runner beans, etc.
- **Vegetable and fruit skins, pips, seeds**—beans, peas, grapes, etc.
- **Mixed food textures**—mince served in thin gravy, soups with lumps of vegetables (e.g. minestrone), etc.
- **Dry, crunchy foods**—crisps, toast, crackers, flaky pastry, etc.
- **Crumbly foods**—crumble, biscuits, bread and pie crusts, etc.
- **Hard foods**—nuts, boiled sweets, brown rice, husks of cereals, chunks of apple, etc.
- **Salad foods** which do not mash down—lettuce, raw tomatoes, spring onions, sweet peppers, etc.
- **Chewy or sticky foods**—toffees, marshmallows, cheese chunks, tough meat, etc.



#### 4. Cauliflower Cheese (serves 2)

½ lb (250g) cauliflower	1½ tsp cornflour
2oz (60g) grated cheese	½oz (15g) butter/margarine
⅓ pint (200ml) milk	Salt and pepper to taste

Boil cauliflower in saucepan of water until cooked. Meanwhile mix cornflour with a little milk until blended into a paste. Pour remainder of milk into a small pan and bring to the boil. Remove from heat and pour milk, stirring all the time, into the blended cornflour paste. Return to pan and simmer for 3-4 minutes until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in cheese and fat. Add sauce to drained cauliflower. Mash to required consistency.

#### Ideas for snacks:

- ◆ Smooth thick yoghurt.
- ◆ Smooth fromage frais.
- ◆ Smooth mousse or instant whip.
- ◆ Custard Pot.
- ◆ Ice-cream—allow to melt and then thicken to correct consistency using thickener; can mix ice-cream with sauce toppings e.g. chocolate, strawberry.
- ◆ Crustless bread soaked in milk, Oxo, Bovril or stock.
- ◆ Plain cake soaked in fruit juice.

#### Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Try eating 'little and often'. Instead of having 3 large meals a day have 3 small meals with small snacks between meals and before bed.
- ◆ Avoid drinking before meals as this can fill you up.
- ◆ Eat at your own speed.
- ◆ Eat in a relaxed environment and avoid distractions.

#### Tips when preparing fork mashable foods:

- ◆ Food should be prepared and cooked until **soft and moist**.
- ◆ Always mash foods with a **thick smooth** nutritious sauce, gravy, yogurt or custard.
- ◆ Liquid such as stock, milk or fruit juice must be fully absorbed and not separate off.
- ◆ Mash in small quantities at a time.
- ◆ Add flavouring to improve the taste of foods, such as herbs, spices, soy, Worcestershire or ketchup sauce, golden or Crusha syrups, vanilla essence, etc.
- ◆ Mash and serve meat, vegetables and starchy food separately. This will make meals look more appetising especially if brightly coloured vegetables, e.g. carrots or broccoli are used.



#### A Guide to Planning Your Meals

Try to include a variety of soft, minced, mashed or puréed foods to make sure of a well balanced and nourishing diet. Use the 'Eatwell Guide' model on page 13 as a guide when preparing your meals.

## Fruits and Vegetables:

Aim to have 5 servings every day:



- ◆ Soft, tinned or stewed fruits (e.g. bananas, apricots, pears, peaches, strawberries) are easily mashed with extra juice but do not allow juice to separate off.
- ◆ Soft, well cooked vegetables (e.g. turnips, carrots, parsnips, cauliflower, courgettes) mashed with vegetable stock.
- ◆ Ensure no skins, stringy textures, large seeds or lumps remain.
- ◆ Minimise excess vitamin loss by:-
  - a) Cooking vegetables immediately after preparation in a minimal amount of water or steaming them.
  - b) Using water from boiled vegetables to make gravy or soup.
  - c) Drinking a glass of fruit juice or vitamin C rich drink per day, thicken if required.

## Meat, Fish and Alternatives:

Include a serving at each main meal:

- ◆ Soft, tender meats and poultry, mashed or finely minced with a thick smooth sauce or gravy.
- ◆ Fish flaked (without bones) with a fork and served in thick smooth sauce (e.g. parsley, butter, Hollandaise).
- ◆ Cooked lentils, mashed and added to soups and casseroles.
- ◆ Eggs if cooked and soft (e.g. poached or scrambled) may be suitable.
- ◆ Smooth fish or meat paste.
- ◆ Houmous.
- ◆ Minced Quorn.
- ◆ Tofu.



## Recipe Ideas

### 1. Fruity Porridge (serves 1)

1oz (30g) porridge oats	Pinch of salt to taste
1/3 pint (200ml) milk	2oz (60g) mashed soft
Fruit (e.g. banana)	

Mix oats, milk and salt (if added) in saucepan. Heat, stirring continuously until boiling. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Add fruit and liquidise if necessary to a puréed consistency.

### 2. Basic White Sauce (serves 2)

1oz (30g) butter/margarine	1oz (30g) cornflour
1/2 pint (300ml) milk	salt and pepper to taste

Place fat, flour and milk together in a saucepan. Mix well until no lumps remain, then heat gently, whisking continuously until sauce thickens and is cooked. Add salt and/or pepper to season if needed.

### 3. Chicken or Fish Supreme (serves 1)

4oz (100g) individual portion of cooked chopped or minced chicken or flaked, poached fish (no bones).  
1 tin condensed mushroom soup.

Mix soup with cooked fish/chicken and heat gently in a saucepan. Remove from heat and allow to cool a little before puréeing in a liquidiser.

## Drinks:



We all need to drink enough to keep us well and prevent problems such as dehydration and constipation.

Most people need to drink at least 8-10 cups or glasses per day (that is 3 pints or 1500ml). We also get some fluid from liquid foods such as soups, sauces, custard, stewed fruits, milk puddings and jelly.

If you are underweight try to choose nourishing drinks such as full cream milk, smoothies, malted drinks, soups, milk, coffee, hot chocolate, Bovril.

Some people with swallowing difficulties need thickened drinks to help them to swallow more safely. The Speech and Language Therapist will advise you if a special thickener needs to be added to your drinks (e.g. Nutilis, Thick'n'Easy, Thicken up) and how much to add to your drinks. Cold drinks often taste better than hot drinks when thickened.

## Cereals, Rice, Pasta and Potatoes:

Include with every meal:



- ◆ Weetabix (fully softened with milk), thick smooth milky porridge with no hard lumps or Ready Brek.
- ◆ Potatoes can be mashed with milk and butter/margarine/sauce/gravy.
- ◆ Jacket potato without skin.
- ◆ Macaroni/well cooked pasta/soft noodles can be chopped and mashed with a thick, smooth sauce.
- ◆ Risotto, pudding or basmati rice well cooked and served with a sauce, gravy or milk should be suitable.
- ◆ Semolina, tapioca and sago puddings are also suitable.

## Milk and Dairy Foods:

Try to have 1 pint of milk every day. This can be used to make up nourishing (thickened) drinks, added to cereals, puddings, soups and sauces.



- ◆ Smooth, thick and creamy custard style and French set yoghurts are suitable provided there are no fruit lumps or pips.
- ◆ Cheese can be grated or soft and added to mashed potato, soups and sauces for extra nourishment.

## Fats and Sugars:

Can be useful to enrich your food with extra energy (calories) if your appetite is poor.



If your appetite is good and you do not need to gain weight foods from this group should be limited.

## Suggested Meal Plan

<b>Breakfast</b>	Soft fruit or juice Cornflakes or Rice Krispies (well soaked in milk) Cooked porridge made with milk Oats so Simple ( <b>not apple</b> ), Ready Brek or Weetabix (well soaked in milk) Tea or coffee
<b>Mid-morning</b>	See ideas for snacks
<b>Lunch</b>	Soup Sandwich with soft filling – crusts removed and bread prepared in a soaking solution Tender roast meat in gravy, fish in sauce, egg or cheese dish Potato, pasta in sauce or rice in sauce or gravy Soft cooked vegetables e.g. carrots
<b>Mid-Afternoon</b>	See ideas for snacks
<b>Evening Meal</b>	Tender roast meat in gravy, fish in sauce, egg or cheese dish OR sandwich with soft filling Potato, pasta in sauce or rice in sauce or gravy Soft cooked vegetables e.g. broccoli tops Soft fruit and cream, milk pudding and soft fresh or tinned fruit or trifle
<b>Bedtime</b>	Milky drinks e.g. Horlicks, Ovaltine, hot chocolate Fruit juice, fruit puree or smoothie

**Foods may need to be fortified – your Dietitian will advise**

## Food Fortification:

If you are **underweight** putting on weight can help you feel stronger, fight infection, improve wound healing and cope better with any treatments. Food can be fortified so you get more calories per mouthful.

## Food Fortification Ideas:

- ◆ Add margarine / butter / grated cheese / cream / gravy to mashed potatoes and vegetables.
- ◆ Add grated cheese/cream to soups and sauces.
- ◆ Add sugar / jam / honey / cream / evaporated milk to cereals, puddings/ drinks.
- ◆ Do not use “diet” products.
- ◆ Use full fat milk and dairy products.
- ◆ Use 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder added to 1 pint of milk and aim to consume one pint of this daily in food and drink.
- ◆ Add mayonnaise / salad cream / soured cream to food.

## Nutritional Supplements:

A well balanced and nourishing diet should provide all the nourishment that you need and prevent weight loss. If weight loss occurs, try to increase your intake of nourishing foods and drinks. Have small snacks between meals e.g. breakfast cereals, puddings, yogurts, milky drinks.

It may be necessary to take a supplement pudding or drink, prescribed by your Doctor/Dietitian, to make sure your diet is providing enough nourishment and prevent you losing weight.