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**Nutrition & Dietetics
Salisbury District Hospital**

Eating Well on a Purée Diet For People with Swallowing Difficulties

National Texture Descriptors 'C'

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Public/Dietsheets/Texture C puree 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.

It is important to have as varied and nourishing diet as possible.

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.

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 puree 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.
- ◆ Drink 8-10 cups of fluid a day to help prevent constipation.

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 / crème fraîche / gravy to puréed potatoes and vegetables.
- ◆ Add soft or grated cheese/cream to soups and sauces.
- ◆ Make packet or condensed soups with milk instead of water.
- ◆ Add sugar / jam / honey / cream / crème fraîche / evaporated milk to cereals, puddings and drinks.
- ◆ Do not use “diet” products.
- ◆ Use full fat milk and dairy products.
- ◆ Fortify milk by using 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder added to 1 pint of milk and aim to consume one pint of this daily instead of full fat milk in food and drink.
- ◆ Add mayonnaise / salad cream / soured cream / yogurt / fromage frais 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, yoghurts, milky drinks.

It may be necessary to take a supplement pudding or drink to make sure that your diet is providing enough nourishment and prevent you losing weight. For further advice speak to your Dietitian.

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 puréeing food:

- ◆ Cut food into small pieces first and cook until soft.
- ◆ Always purée foods with a nutritious sauce, gravy, condensed soup or liquid such as stock, milk or fruit juice—avoid using just water as this dilutes the nutritional value of the food.
- ◆ Purée in small quantities at a time to avoid lumps forming.
- ◆ Add flavouring to improve the taste of foods, such as herbs, spices, soy, mustard, Worcestershire or ketchup sauce, chocolate, Golden or Crusha syrups, vanilla essence, etc.
- ◆ Add thickening powder (e.g. cornflour, Nutilis, Thick’n Easy) when puréeing foods to give a better food texture that does not separate on standing.
- ◆ Purée 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.
- ◆ It maybe easier to cook and purée a large batch of food and freeze it into individual portion. There are food shaped moulds to make this easier.
- ◆ Never refreeze foods.
- ◆ Always stir the purée food and ensure it is thoroughly cooked until piping hot.

A Guide to Planning Your Meals:

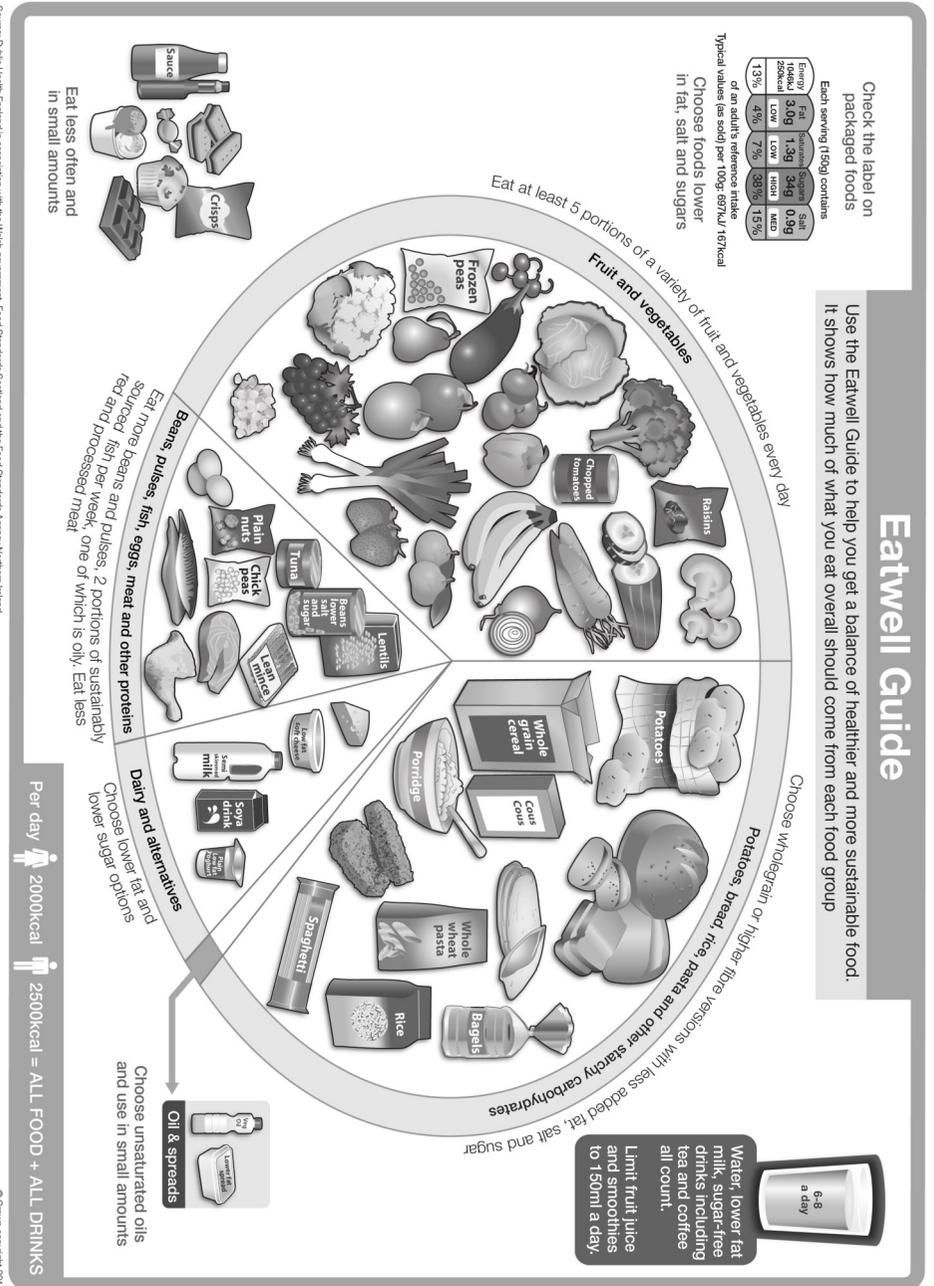
Try to include a variety of puréed foods to make sure of a well balanced and nourishing diet. Use the 'Eatwell Guide' model on page 11 as a guide when preparing your meals.

Fruits and Vegetables:

Aim to have 5 servings every day.



- ◆ Soft, tinned or stewed fruits (e.g. bananas, apricots, pears, peaches, strawberries) puréed with extra juice and thickener added if required.
- ◆ All skins, seeds and pips should be removed first and sieved if necessary after they have been puréed.
- ◆ Fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables cooked until soft, (e.g. turnips, carrots, parsnips, cauliflower, courgettes) puréed with vegetable stock or sauce. Avoid peas, green beans and sweetcorn. 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.



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 with ice-cream sauce toppings e.g. chocolate, strawberry.
- ◆ Crustless bread soaked in milk, Oxo, Bovril or stock.
- ◆ Plain cake soaked in fruit juice.

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. Nutrilis, Thick'n'Easy, Thicken up) and how much to add to your drinks. Cold drinks often taste better than hot drinks when thickened.

Meat, Fish and Alternatives:

Include a serving of protein foods at each main meal.



- ◆ Soft, tender meats and poultry, puréed with a thick smooth sauce or gravy.
- ◆ Fresh, frozen or tinned fish without bones, cooked by steaming, baking, poaching or microwaving, can be puréed in sauce (e.g. parsley, butter, cheese, Hollandaise).
- ◆ Cooked lentils, puréed and added to soups and casseroles.
- ◆ Cheese can be added to sauces. Avoid grating cheese directly onto food and then heated as it may become stringy and difficult to swallow.
- ◆ Baked or scrambled eggs purée well.

Cereals, Rice, Pasta and Potatoes:

Include starchy foods with every meal:



- ◆ Weetabix softened with hot milk, Ready Brek, porridge or Oats So Simple made with milk can be puréed if necessary.
- ◆ Bread (crusts removed), cake, crackers and biscuits can be soaked to alter their consistency. Use water, fruit juice, stock cubes, Bovril or Oxo blended with food thickener, cover foods, put in the fridge and allow solution to be absorbed until food soft and moist.
- ◆ Potatoes can be mashed with milk and butter / margarine / sauce / gravy and then puréed if still too lumpy.
- ◆ Macaroni / well cooked pasta / soft noodles can be puréed with a thick, smooth sauce or soup. Sauces or soup can be homemade, packet, canned or from a jar.

- ◆ Risotto, pudding or basmati rice cooked and puréed with a sauce, soup, gravy or milk.
- ◆ Semolina, tapioca, ground rice and sago puddings are also suitable but may need to be puréed.

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 yogurts are suitable provided there are no fruit lumps or pips.
- ◆ Instant whips, blancmange, mousse, crème caramel, egg custard.
- ◆ Soft cheese e.g. cream cheese can be 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:

Breakfast:	Fruit juice without “bits” or puréed fruit Puréed milky porridge, Ready Brek, Oat So Simple Weetabix soaked in hot milk
Mid-morning:	Milky drink, fruit juice, smoothie
Lunch:	Soup Meat, chicken or fish (without bones), puréed with sauce or gravy Puréed cooked vegetables Creamed potato, pasta in sauce, puréed Puréed sieved fruit and custard or soft tinned fruit (no skins or pips) with cream Smooth milk puddings e.g. semolina, puréed rice puddings, sago Smooth thick yoghurt
Mid-afternoon:	Milky drink, fruit juice, smoothie
Evening meal:	As lunch
Bedtime:	Milky drink e.g. drinking chocolate, Horlicks, Ovaltine.