

Why is a Level 6 (Soft and Bitesized) Diet Needed?

Patient Information

Speech & Language Therapy

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Why is a level 6 (soft and bitesized) diet needed?

The swallowing muscles are not working properly and there is a risk of choking. Also, if the muscles in your mouth are weak, you may get tired before you have managed to eat enough.

Who decided that it was needed?

The Speech and Language Therapist, who will have assessed how well the swallowing muscles are working.

What is a level 6 (soft and bitesized) diet?

This refers to food that requires only a small amount of chewing for you to swallow it safely. It should be easily broken up with a fork and be tender and moist, and may have some variation in texture. The pieces of food should be no more than 1.5cm x 1.5cm in size (approx. ½" x ½" – the size of a thumbnail). They should be easily squashed with a fork and will not return to their original shape.

What is a mixed consistency?

This refers to foods that are a mixture of liquid with solid "bits" in them.

- e.g. Soup with "bits" in it
- Mince in gravy
- "Runny" rice pudding
- Casseroles, stews or curries

The liquid portion of these foods should be thick and the solid part must be soft and tender and no more than 1.5cm x 1.5 cm in size. There should be no hard lumps.

Do I need to avoid mixed consistencies?

Yes ☐ No ☐

What should I avoid eating?

- Things that are "chewy", "flaky", "crumbly", hard or have skin or pips, e.g. Tough meat, pastry, salad, beans, sweetcorn, peas, "hard" fruits (apples, grapes, oranges).
- Large pieces or mouthfuls of food.

Can I eat bread and sandwiches?

Your Speech & Language Therapist will assess your ability to eat bread or sandwiches. If you are safe to eat bread or sandwiches, it must be soft bread and fillings such as jam, spread, pâté, egg or tuna mayonnaise, grated cheese, and must be cut into the appropriate bitesized pieces.

**** I can / cannot have bread or soft sandwiches**

How long do I need to continue?

Until the Speech and Language Therapist says it is safe to stop.

Examples of suitable soft foods

Savoury

- Corned beef
- Hot dog/Skinless sausages cut into appropriate size
- Cottage cheese
- Spaghetti hoops etc.
- Dumplings soaked in gravy and cut into appropriate size
- Macaroni cheese or Cauliflower cheese cut into appropriate size
- Tinned fish – e.g. tuna, salmon (mixed with mayonnaise or salad cream)
- Eggs – scrambled, boiled, omelette (plain or cheese and cut into appropriate size)
- Well cooked pasta in a smooth sauce cut into appropriate size
- Steamed fish cut into appropriate size (with or without thick sauce)
- Fish cakes cut into appropriate size
- Creamed soups (thick with no lumps)
- Well-cooked casseroled or stewed meats and vegetables (see mixed consistencies above)

Vegetables

- Very soft chips in gravy cut into appropriate size
- Mashed parsnips
- Mushy peas
- Tinned plum tomatoes (no juice)
- Very soft boiled potatoes cut into appropriate size
- Very soft carrots, turnips, cauliflower, courgettes, beetroot etc. cut into appropriate size

Fruit (all cut into appropriate size)

- Banana
- Strawberries
- Stewed fruit
- Pears, apricots, peaches, plums, grapes, all without skin

Desserts

- Mousse
- Trifle
- Sponge (with cream or custard) cut into appropriate size
- Blancmange
- Yoghurt
- Semolina
- Rice pudding
- Custard (hot or cold)

Snacks

Mousse/Instant Whip, yoghurt, Jaffa cakes cut into appropriate sized pieces, small pieces of biscuits dunked in tea, cake cut into appropriate size, pâté, hummus.

You can also buy pre-prepared meals from a number of companies. Ask your Speech and Language Therapist for more information.

Contact

Your Speech and Language Therapist is:

Telephone Number:

Reference:

“Complete IDDSI Framework Detailed Definitions”, International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative, 2017, www.iddsi.org

Notes

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website:

www.wvl.nhs.uk/patient_information/Leaflets/default.aspx

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in department/ward.

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