Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Level 7 (Easy to Chew) Diet

Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Level 7 (Easy to Chew) Diet

Patient Information

Speech & Language Therapy

- Author ID: RD
- Leaflet ref: SL 018
- Version: 2
- Leaflet title: Level 7 (Easy to chew) diet
- Date Produced: December 2024
- Expiry Date: December 2026

Why is a level 7 (regular easy to chew) diet needed?

A level 7 easy to chew diet may be recommended for the following reasons:

- You are not able to bite off pieces of food but are able to chew into pieces that are safe to swallow.
- You may have weakness of the muscles that control your swallowing, meaning that you are at risk of choking.
- You may be suffering from fatigue, so you get tired before you have managed to eat enough.

Who decided I needed a level 7 (regular easy to chew) diet?

This was decided by your Speech & Language Therapist, who will have assessed how well you are able to chew and swallow.

How long do I need to have this type of diet?

You may be reviewed by a Speech & Language Therapist in the community, who will see if you can change the texture of your food, or this may be the safest option for you in the long term.

If you have not been referred to the Community Speech & Language Therapy Team by the hospital, you can request a referral via your GP.

What is a level 7 (regular easy to chew) diet?

- Normal, everyday foods* of soft/tender texture
- Any method may be used to eat these foods (e.g., fingers, fork, spoon, chopsticks etc.)
- Food piece size is not restricted in Level 7; therefore foods may be a range of sizes.
- Do not use foods that are: hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, have stringy textures, pips/seeds, bones, or gristle
- You should be able to ‘bite off’ pieces of soft and tender food and choose bite-sizes that are safe to chew and swallow
- You should be able to chew pieces of soft and tender food, so they are safe to swallow without tiring easily
- Your tongue should be able to move food for chewing and apply pressure, until the food is soft and moist enough to be easily swallowed
- You should be able to remove from your mouth bone, gristle (or other hard pieces that cannot be swallowed safely) without help or direction from others

***May include ‘mixed thin and thick texture’ food and liquids together – e.g., cereal and milk, minestrone soup, meat, and vegetables in gravy etc.**

How do I make a level 7 (regular easy to chew) diet?

Serve food as normal. If you notice the food pieces are not being chewed well enough, please contact your Speech & Language Therapist to make sure you are on the correct food texture.

How do I know if my food is the right consistency?

Foods should be able to be cut or broken apart with the side of a fork or spoon.

Food textures and foods to avoid

- **Hard or dry food** - Nuts, raw vegetables (e.g., carrot, cauliflower, broccoli), dry cakes, bread, dry cereal.
- **Tough or fibrous foods** - Steak, pineapple.
- **Chewy** – Lollies, candies, sweets, cheese chunks, marshmallows, chewing gum, sticky mashed potato, dried fruits, sticky foods
- **Crispy** - Crackling, crisp bacon, cornflakes
- **Crunchy food** - Raw carrot, raw apple, popcorn
- **Sharp or spiky** - Corn chips, crisps
- **Pips and seeds** - Apple seeds, pumpkin seeds, white of orange
- **Bone or gristle** - Chicken bones, fish bones, other bones, meat with gristle
- **Sticky or gummy food** - Edible gelatin, sticky rice cakes
- **Stringy food** - Beans, rhubarb

Where can I find more information about level 7 easy to chew foods?

Please ask your Speech & Language Therapist for more information, or you can visit the following website: www.IDDSI.org

Reference

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



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