Finger Foods
Information for patients, relatives and carers

ⓘ For more information, please contact:

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Caring with pride
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Caring about what we do ● Respecting and valuing each other
Why choose finger foods?

Finger foods are foods intended to be picked up with the fingers and eaten.

Finger foods can provide a nutritious and enjoyable alternative to meals served on a plate. They can also be used to provide additional nourishing snacks for those who need them.

Finger foods can be particularly useful for people who forget to eat or find co-ordination difficult, such as with dementia or following a stroke.

Finger foods can be:

- Served at the table in place of a plated meal
- Offered as snacks between meals
- Left in different places to pick up and eat throughout the day
Benefits of finger foods

- Enable people to feed themselves, helping maintain independence
- Help preserve eating skills
- Can renew interest in food and stimulate appetite
- Can improve food intake
- Can boost confidence and self-esteem at mealtimes
- Offer more choice and freedom to eat as desired
- Don’t need to be served hot, which is good for people who need time to eat

Finger foods for people with swallowing difficulties

The textures of the some finger foods listed in this booklet will not be suitable for people with swallowing difficulties.

Please check suitability against any specific swallowing recommendations that may have been made by a Speech and Language Therapist.
High protein finger foods

It is important to include high protein foods in our diet. The body needs protein to grow and repair itself.

Include a high protein food with all main meals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cold meat pieces</th>
<th>Cooked prawns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sausage rolls</td>
<td>Mini or sliced pork pies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini scotch eggs</td>
<td>Chicken goujons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini sausages</td>
<td>Meat / fish on skewer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken drumsticks</td>
<td>Scampi pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini burgers</td>
<td>Sushi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled-up ham</td>
<td>Boiled eggs halved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieces of meatloaf</td>
<td>Scotch eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish fingers</td>
<td>Mini quiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab sticks</td>
<td>Nut loaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts</td>
<td>Frozen yoghurt on stick*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese cubes</td>
<td>Chicken / meat spring roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakora</td>
<td>Samosa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To increase calories:

- Add a dip e.g. full fat mayonnaise, cream cheese, tartare sauce or yoghurt
- Offer these finger foods as extra snacks between meals

* Sharp skewers or sticks may not be safe to use for some people
Starchy carbohydrate finger foods

Starchy carbohydrate foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toast fingers</th>
<th>Cereal bar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small bread rolls</td>
<td>Finger sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggy bread squares</td>
<td>Malt / fruit loaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crumpets</td>
<td>Oatcakes / crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive biscuits</td>
<td>Waffles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini naan slices</td>
<td>Pitta slices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small chapati</td>
<td>Pizza slices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato waffles</td>
<td>Chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato wedges</td>
<td>New potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roast potatoes</td>
<td>Potato or corn crisps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice cakes</td>
<td>Popcorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread sticks</td>
<td>Cheese straws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideas for fillings / toppings:

- Meat / fish paste
- Cold meats
- Tinned fish
- Tuna mayonnaise
- Egg mayonnaise
- Cream cheese
- Cheese spread
- Houmous

To increase calories:

- Add butter, mayonnaise, jam / honey, peanut butter, chocolate / hazelnut spread, clotted cream
- Offer these finger foods as snacks between meals
**Fruit and vegetable finger foods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini or sliced banana</th>
<th>Orange / satsuma segments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sliced apple / pear</td>
<td>Grapes and berries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melon / pineapple chunks</td>
<td>Peach / nectarine / mango slices with stone removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit kebab*</td>
<td>Dried fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salad sticks (carrot, celery, pepper, cucumber)</td>
<td>Cherry tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugarsnap peas</td>
<td>Baby corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangetout</td>
<td>Cooked vegetables (broccoli spears, cauliflower florets, green beans)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**To increase calories:**
- Add dip e.g. houmous, cream cheese, Greek yoghurt, clotted cream
- Try frying fruit slices in butter and sugar

* Sharp skewers or sticks may not be safe to use for some people
### High sugar / fat finger foods and desserts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini croissants, pastries, pain au chocolat</th>
<th>Mini fruit pie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini brioche rolls</td>
<td>Mini muffins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun size cake bars</td>
<td>Iced buns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flapjacks</td>
<td>Mini fruit pies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate cornflake / rice krispie cake</td>
<td>Fun-size chocolate bars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscuits</td>
<td>Baklava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam tarts</td>
<td>Sweet mince pies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choc ice</td>
<td>Ice lolly*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream cheese rolls (full fat)</td>
<td>Ice cream cone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sharp skewers or sticks may not be safe to use for some people
Example finger food menus

These menus can be adapted to take into account individual likes, dislikes and dietary requirements.

Example Menu 1

**Breakfast**
Cereal bar and three to four dried apricots
Orange juice
Tea or coffee

**Mid-morning**
Eggy bread squares, fruit slices
Tea or coffee

**Lunch**
Mini beef burgers in mini bread buns with tomato sauce,
potato wedges, baby corn,
Malt loaf

**Mid afternoon**
Squares of toast with pate or cream cheese
Tea or coffee

**Evening meal**
Chicken and vegetable skewers with yogurt dip,
salad sticks, pitta slices, Slice of cake

**Bedtime**
Milky drink e.g. Horlicks, Ovaltine, hot chocolate,
milkshake
Example Menu 2

Breakfast
Hard-boiled egg in quarters
Toast squares with butter/jam
Apple juice
Tea or coffee

Mid-morning
Flapjack, fruit slices
Tea or coffee

Lunch
Mini quiche, baby potatoes, broccoli spears
Mini fruit pie

Mid afternoon
Cheese cubes and grapes
Tea or coffee

Evening meal
Mini sandwiches e.g. tuna mayonnaise, egg mayonnaise, soft cheese, salad sticks
Mini chocolate cornflake cakes

Bedtime
Milky drink e.g. Horlicks, Ovaltine, hot chocolate, milkshake
Tips when offering a finger food menu

- Menu needs to be creative and varied

- Present food attractively, e.g. use attractive plate, different coloured foods

- Use foods that are easy to hold

- For people who wander choose foods that can be eaten on the move or carried in a pouch

- People’s capabilities can change, finger foods might be better at certain mealtimes and plated meals at others

- Show the person what to do so they can copy

- Allow time to look at the food and explore it

- Take time to describe the food

- Some foods will lose their freshness and appeal if left out for too long, so may need replacing

- Provide wipes or warm flannels to wipe hands before/after meals
Acknowledgements

This booklet is based on information produced by and used with permission of the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust.
Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:
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