



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Soft and Moist Diet

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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Introduction

This leaflet gives advice about eating a soft and moist diet. It includes food ideas to help you eat a balanced diet and get enough energy and nutrients.

You may be asked to follow a soft and moist diet for different reasons. Use this leaflet as a guide and avoid any foods that cause you discomfort or are difficult to chew or swallow.

Do not use this leaflet if a Speech and Language Therapist has given you advice about a specific texture-modified diet IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative) levels. Follow the advice they have given you.

What is a soft and moist diet?

Soft and moist foods are easy to chew and swallow. They include foods that are:

- Naturally soft, such as banana and yoghurt.
- Easy to mash with a fork.
- Cooked until soft such as mashed potato.
- Soft enough to break into small pieces and easy to chew.
- Made softer by adding sauces, milk, gravy or other liquids.

Foods that may be difficult to eat

Some foods need more chewing or can be harder to swallow. You may find it helpful to avoid:

- Nuts and seeds.
- Raw fruit and vegetables, especially those with tough skins, pips or pith.
- Tough meat.
- Dry, crunchy or crispy foods.
- Bread.
- Stringy foods.

Eating a balanced diet

Try to eat a variety of foods each day. Include foods from each of the following food groups to help you get the nutrients your body needs.

1. Protein Foods

Meat, Fish and Vegetarian Alternatives

- Mince, tender stews and casseroles with the bones, gristle and tough pieces removed.
- Skinless sausages with gravy or sauce.
- Corned beef, fish paste, meat pâté or meat paste.
- Flaked fish with all bones and skin removed.

- Poached fish or fish cooked in a bag is often softer and easier to eat.

Avoid

- Crusty pastry, tough or dry meats

Beans, Lentils and Pulses

- Well cooked beans or lentils with plenty of gravy, sauce or stock.
- Hummus.

If you find the skins difficult to eat, try blending or puréeing beans, lentils or pulses.

Eggs

- Scrambled or poached.
- Egg mayonnaise.
- Mashed boiled eggs.
- Omelette.

2. Starchy Foods

Cereals

- Ready Brek or porridge with plenty of milk.
- Weetabix or Rice Krispies soaked in milk.

Potatoes

- Mashed potato or sweet potato (without skins).
- Jacket potato without skin, plenty of butter or moist filling.

Pasta and Rice

- Well cooked with plenty of sauce.

Bread

- Soft hot buttered toast without crusts.

Some people find bread difficult to swallow because it can feel like it sticks in the mouth or throat.

3. Fruit and Vegetables

Fruit

- Soft fruits such as banana, mango, melon, plums without skins.
- Stewed, soft, tinned or mashed fruits are suitable.
- Fruit juices and smoothies.
- Fruit puree or pouches.

Avoid

- Skins, pips and pith if causing problems.

Vegetables

- Well cooked, soft vegetables, such as carrots, parsnips, swede, turnips, broccoli and cauliflower florets.
- Tinned tomatoes, baked beans, mushy peas.
- Soft or mashed avocado.
- Smooth soups.

Avoid

- Stringy vegetables, such as celery, green beans.
- Sweetcorn and peas.

4. Dairy Foods and Alternatives

Milk

- Cow's milk or fortified dairy-free milks, such as oat, soya, coconut.

Cheese

- Soft cheese including cream cheese or cheese spread, ricotta, mascarpone.
- Grated cheese in cooking.
- Cottage cheese.

Yoghurt and Other Dairy Foods

- Yoghurts and fromage frais.
- Cream.
- Ice cream.

5. Other foods

Savoury Foods and Snacks:

- Dissolving crisps such as Quavers®, Skips® or corn puffs.
- Yorkshire pudding softened with gravy.
- Smooth nut butters.
- Avoid nuts, seeds and dried fruit.

Desserts and Sweet Snacks:

- Rice pudding, custard, mousse or whip.
- Plain cake with custard.

Suggested meal ideas

Breakfast

- Weetabix with warm or cold milk.
- Scrambled eggs.
- Soft, stewed or mashed fruit with yoghurt or cream.
- Porridge or Ready Brek with full-fat milk or cream with sugar, honey or syrup.

Meat dishes

- Corned beef hash.
- Shepherd's pie.
- Meat casserole or stew or curry served with mashed potatoes or rice and plenty of sauce.
- Beef or Irish stew.
- Hotpot.
- Soft, cooked pasta with bolognese.
- Lasagne.
- Chilli con carne.
- Chicken in cream sauce.

Fish dishes

- Fish pie.
- Fish in sauce served with mashed potatoes and vegetables.
- Tuna or salmon, tinned or with sauce or mayonnaise with mashed potatoes and vegetables.
- Salmon mousse – salmon blended with teriyaki sauce or crème fraîche, served with mashed potatoes and vegetables.
- Fish pate.

Vegetable dishes

- Soups, such as vegetable, lentil or tofu soup.
Add cream, coconut milk or crème fraîche to make meals more nourishing.
- Cauliflower or broccoli cheese.
- Cheese and potato pie.
- Lentil dahl or casserole served with rice or mashed potato with vegetables.
- Pasta with tomato or cheese sauce.
Add vegetarian mince for extra protein.
- Eggs – mashed boiled, scrambled or omelette.
- Vegetable curry made with soft tofu served with rice.
- Ratatouille with well cooked vegetables.

- Vegetable cottage pie made with tinned lentils, baked beans and topped with mashed potato.
- Soft, cooked risotto.

Puddings and sweet snacks

- Ice cream.
- Chocolate.
- Yoghurt, mousse or whip.
- Rice or milk puddings.
- Semolina pudding.
- Blancmange.
- Mini rolls.
- Tiramisu.
- Crème caramel.
- Stewed or soft fruit with custard or cream.
- Trifle.
- Fruit crumble or pie, softened with custard or cream.

Savoury snacks

- Pate or hummus or guacamole.
- Nut butter.
- Dissolving crisps, such as Quavers, Skips or corn puffs.

How to add flavour

Softer foods can sometimes have less flavour. You can add extra flavour to make meals more enjoyable.

- Spreads: smooth peanut butter, chocolate spread.
- Sweet options: jam, honey, chocolate or toffee sauce.
- Sauces and dressings: gravy, parsley sauce, curry sauce, mayonnaise, salad dressings, sour cream.
- Condiments: tomato ketchup, salad cream, brown sauce.
- Cooking sauces: white sauce, cheese sauce, pasta sauces, sweet and sour sauce.
- Other options: dips and smooth soups.

Getting enough to eat

If you do not feel like eating much or are losing weight without meaning to:

- Try eating smaller meals and snacks more often, aiming for something every two to three hours.
- Try not to drink lots of fluid before meals as this may make you feel full.
- You may find you are able to eat better at one time of day. Try to eat more at these times.

- Unless you are trying to lose weight, avoid diet products and low-fat, sugar free or low-calorie foods.
- If you find preparing meals difficult, think about having ready meals and keeping some store cupboard foods at home, such as tinned foods and high-calorie spreads like chocolate spread or jam.
- To save time and energy, food can be cooked in larger portions and then frozen.

Making foods more nourishing (food fortification)

Adding extra energy and protein to food and drinks can help you get the nutrition you need without increasing portion sizes.

Fortified Milk

To make fortified milk:

- Mix 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder or soya protein powder with 1 pint of full-fat milk, or your preferred milk alternative.
- Whisk well until smooth.

Use fortified milk in drinks and cooking. If you have a poor appetite, aim to have up to 1 pint each day.

Sauces: Add grated cheese, cream cheese, silken tofu, milk powder, pea or soya protein powder, smooth full fat yoghurt, evaporated milk, cream, crème fraiche, margarine, butter.

Nourishing drinks:

Aim to have nourishing drinks between meals. You can also sip them throughout the day.

- Hot milky drinks, such as Horlicks, hot chocolate or milky coffee.
- Full fat milk or cold milkshakes made with ice cream or flavouring, such as Nesquik or supermarket own brand milkshake powder.
- Complan or supermarket equivalent alternatives.

Constipation

Constipation can happen if you:

- do not eat or drink enough,
- do not get enough fibre,
- are less active than usual,
- take certain medicines.

To help prevent constipation:

- Aim to drink at least 1.6 to 2 litres of fluid each day (about 8 to 10 mugs or glasses).
- Try to include fruit and vegetables with each meal where possible.

- Include high-fibre foods, such as smooth porridge or Weetabix soaked with milk.

Mouth care

When you have difficulties eating, drinking or swallowing, it is important to keep your mouth clean.

Germs can build up in your mouth and may lead to chest infections. To help stop this:

- Clean your teeth regularly, ideally after each meal.
- Check there is no food left in your mouth after eating. Swallow until your mouth is cleared of residue. If needed, rinse your mouth and spit out any left over food.
- Remove and clean dentures every night. Use a denture fixative so your dentures fit well.

If you have a sore mouth:

- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids.
- Avoid very hot drinks, spicy and acidic food.
- Keep food moist by adding extra sauce or gravy.
- Clean teeth regularly – a baby toothbrush can be more comfortable than an adult one.

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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York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE,
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email: yhs-tr.yorkdietitians@nhs.net

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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