Advice about soft and liquidised food
A guide for patients and their families
Who is this booklet for?

With some types of illness or treatment you may experience a sore mouth or swallowing problems, which makes eating difficult. However, it is very important to keep well nourished, as this will help you cope with your treatment and illness. This booklet gives you some ideas on preparing soft or liquidised foods. We hope this booklet will guide you and your carers on keeping you well nourished.

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics
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A soft, nourishing diet

This section is for people who can manage normal foods but of a soft texture. It includes ideas for breakfast, savoury snacks, main meals and desserts. If you are concerned about your weight because you have either lost weight or are struggling to maintain your weight, you may wish to enrich your foods. Please look at the advice about enriching your foods on page 3.

If you have diabetes

The advice in this booklet includes recommendations for foods containing high levels of sugar and fat.

We advise you to consult your GP, dietitian or diabetes nurse for individual advice as some of the recommended foods and drinks may not be suitable for you.

Ideas for meals

Breakfast

■ Try a glass of fresh fruit juice with your breakfast. (Avoid fruit juice if your mouth is sore.)

■ Porridge or instant oat cereal made with whole milk or cream. Add sugar, jam, syrup or honey.

■ Wheat biscuits or other breakfast cereals (avoid cereals with dried fruit or nuts) soaked in hot or cold milk. Add sugar, syrup or honey to taste.

■ Yogurt or fromage frais.

■ Stewed or soft fruit, for example, apple, apricots, banana or prunes. Serve with yogurt, fromage frais or cream.

■ Eggs: omelette, scrambled, poached, fried or boiled. (Make sure the white and yolk of the eggs are solid.)

■ Baked beans or tinned spaghetti.

■ Skinless sausages or frankfurters.
Savoury snacks or main meals

■ Soup: home made, tinned or packet. Made with milk and topped with a sprinkling of grated cheese.
■ Eggs: see breakfast suggestions.
■ Baked beans or tinned spaghetti with grated cheese.
■ Macaroni cheese or tinned ravioli, topped with cheese.
■ Jacket potato (no skin) with a soft filling such as cottage cheese, cream cheese, baked beans, ratatouille or tinned fish (salmon or tuna mashed with mayonnaise).
■ Corned beef hash.
■ Kedgeree.
■ Savoury mince: tasty casserole or hot pot.
■ Fish in a sauce: home made, frozen or packet (make sure there are no bones in the fish).
■ Fisherman’s pie.
■ Cottage pie, chilli con carne*.
■ Cauliflower cheese.
■ Tripe and onion gravy.
■ Dhal, pulse dishes.
■ Vegetable curry.
■ Spaghetti bolognese.
■ Skinless sausage, onion gravy and mashed potato.
■ Dishes made with soya mince, Quorn or tofu.

Try serving the above with soft vegetables.

* If your mouth or throat is sore, you may wish to avoid foods that are very hot or very cold, or meals that are salty, spicy or contain vinegar. You may also need to avoid fruit juices.
Desserts

■ Milk puddings such as rice, semolina, custard.
■ Soft trifle.
■ Soft stewed fruit with custard, cream or condensed/ evaporated milk.
■ Egg custard, crème caramel.
■ Yogurt or fromage frais.
■ Milk jelly, instant whip, mousse, blancmange.
■ Ice cream or sorbet.
■ Sponge and custard.

Add extra cream, ice cream, honey or jam if desired.

Enriching your food

Even though you may be eating less, it is important to maintain your weight or regain lost weight. This section suggests ways in which you can make the food you eat more nourishing by adding extra calories using full fat products, sugars and fortified milk. You can enrich your food using the following.

Dairy produce:
Such as full fat milk, full cream yogurt, cream cheese, grated cheese.

Add grated cheese to potatoes, vegetables and soups. Add extra cream or fortified milk to soups, mashed potatoes and milk puddings.

Fats:
Such as margarine, butter, cream, mayonnaise.

Add to snacks and main meals. For example, add butter and full cream milk to mashed potatoes, to vegetables or to rice pudding.
Sugars:
Such as sugar, honey, glucose, syrup, seedless jam.
Add jam to semolina or rice pudding, extra sugar to custard or honey, or syrup to porridge.

Fortified milk:
Mix 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to 1 pint (568mls) of full cream milk.
Store this in the fridge and use whenever you would use ordinary milk, for example, cereals, porridge, soups, milk puddings, drinks. Do not keep fortified milk for longer than 24 hours.

Try to aim for 6 small meals or nourishing snacks each day.

Nourishing drinks
Nourishing drinks can replace a light meal when made up with full cream milk and come in a range of sweet and savoury flavours.

- Milky drinks, Horlicks, Ovaltine, cocoa
- Milk shakes with added ice cream
- Special powdered drinks such as Complan, Build up, or Recovery. Try blending with fresh fruit, yogurt, crushed ice or ice cream for a change.

Some special meal replacement drinks are available on prescription. Ask your GP for advice about these. There is also a Christie booklet available “Nutritional Drinks” which includes recipes.
Nourishing liquidised food
This section is for people who may need food with a very smooth consistency.

Using a liquidiser can help adjust the texture of your foods. You could also use a hand blender or sieve.

If you need financial help to buy or obtain a liquidiser, a social worker can give you advice about this.

It is important that your food still looks appetising and attractive. Liquidising meat, fish, potato and vegetables separately can make your meal look more appealing. Colour is also important. For example, try serving brightly coloured vegetables, such as mashed or puréed carrots together with mashed potato and creamed chicken. Using garnishes such as parsley and lemon slices can also improve the appearance of the meal. If you are using liquids to thin down foods, try to use whole milk where possible, rather than water. Milk provides more energy and nutrition.

The tips below may help when preparing liquidised meals.

**Tips when using the liquidiser**
- Before switching on, ensure the blades are covered with food or liquid.
- You may find it easier to blend small quantities at a time as the liquidiser then works more efficiently. It may take up to two minutes to blend the food to the correct consistency.
- If using boiling liquids, such as sauces, allow to cool slightly before adding to the liquidiser.
- Check the lid is secure before switching on to prevent splashes and spills.
- Rinse immediately after use and clean using warm water and detergent. Be careful not to immerse the base of the machine or any electrical parts in the water.
What foods can I liquidise?

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<th>Food group</th>
<th>Tips when liquidising</th>
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| **Bread, cereal and potato**| - Bread can be hard to liquidise. Avoid using freshly baked bread and break the bread into small pieces before adding to the liquidiser. The breadcrumbs can then be frozen.  
- Pasta should be cooked till soft and then blended with a sauce. Try a nourishing cream or cheese based sauce.  
- Potatoes should be cooked till soft and then liquidised using milk or cream with butter or margarine. Do not blend for too long as the potato can go sticky. Alternatively, use instant mash made up with whole milk and added cream cheese, grated cheese, cream or butter.  
- Porridge or instant oat cereal or wheat biscuits made up with whole milk. |
| **Meat, poultry, fish, eggs and pulses** | - Fish: Because of the risk of bones it is not recommended to liquidise fresh fish – however, you could liquidise boil in the bag fish as this does not generally contain bones.  
- Meat and poultry should be cooked and then trimmed to remove any skin, gristle or fat. Cut into small cubes before liquidising and add gravy or sauce.  
- Beans, pulses and lentils. These should be cooked until very soft or alternatively use tinned varieties. You may need to blend with a sauce. |
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| **Milk and dairy** | ■ Yoghurt. Choose smooth and creamy whole milk yoghurts.  
■ Hard cheeses. These can be grated and added into liquidised soups and sauces.  
■ Cream, evaporated or condensed milk, yoghurt, custard, ice cream and milk are useful to add to puddings to blend to a smooth consistency.  
■ Skimmed milk powder can be used to enrich soups and sauces.                                                                                                                                 |
| **Fruit and vegetables** | ■ Use tinned, frozen or fresh fruit and vegetables.  
■ Vegetables can be cooked until soft. Stringy vegetables or vegetables with skins, such as peas, runner beans, sweetcorn and celery may not be a smooth consistency and you may want to sieve these. You may also need to add stock or gravy to some vegetables to get a smooth purée.  
■ If using tinned fruit, drain the syrup or juice before liquidising. Try serving with custard, cream, ice cream or evaporated milk. Fruits containing pips, skins or seeds may need to be sieved. |
## Food group | Tips when liquidising
---|---
**Ready-made meals/desserts**
These can contain a combination of the food groups listed above. | - Follow the cooking instructions on the tin or packet. Use the liquidiser to produce a smooth texture. You may need to use additional sauces or gravy.
- Examples of meals include shepherd’s pie, beef casserole, fisherman’s pie, macaroni cheese, lasagne, stew and dumplings, corned beef hash and cauliflower cheese.
- Tinned or packet desserts include custard, milk puddings, thick yoghurts, crème caramel, instant whip, mousse and ice cream.

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*Try to ensure your meals are as nourishing as possible by enriching the protein and energy content. You can find more information about enriching foods on page 3.*

**Sample Menu Plan**

**Breakfast**  
Wheat biscuits, instant oat cereal or porridge liquidised with full cream milk, fortified milk or cream plus sugar, syrup or honey.

**Mid morning**  
Milky drink or supplement drink.

**Midday meal**  
Minced meat purée or casserole, or macaroni cheese with mashed potatoes and butter with vegetables.

or a ready-made meal puréed.

Puréed tinned or stewed fruit, custard or cream.

or full fat yogurt or mousse.

or milk pudding.
**Mid afternoon**  Milky drink or supplement drink.

**Evening meal**  As midday meal.

**Supper**  Milky drink or supplement drink.

**Constipation**

Constipation can become a problem when you are not able to eat a normal diet. If you do become constipated take more fruit juice*, vegetable juice, sieved vegetables, stewed or tinned fruit such as prunes, apricots liquidised and sieved and whole grain cereals such as liquidised porridge, Wheat biscuits, instant oat cereal etc. (*Avoid this if your mouth is sore).

Make sure you are also drinking 6 to 8 cups of fluid per day to help alleviate or prevent constipation.

**Christie booklets**

Further information booklets include:

- **Nutritional Drinks.** Describes all the special nutritional products available to help people when eating is difficult.

- **Eating - help yourself.** Gives general information about coping with eating difficulties when having treatment.

For the visually disabled: Large print versions of patient information are available. Please contact Patient Information on 0161 446 3576 or you can download these from the Christie website at www.christie.nhs.uk

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact Patient.Information@christie.nhs.uk
Visit the Cancer Information Centre:

The Christie at Withington Tel: 0161 446 8100
The Christie at Oldham Tel: 0161 918 7745
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Open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.
Opening times can vary, please ring to check before making a special journey.