

Patient Information

Soft diet

This leaflet gives you (and anyone involved in preparing your food) advice about following a soft, nutritious diet.

It also has suggestions on how to adapt everyday meals and drinks and still make them tasty and appetising.

(If you have been advised by a Speech & Language Therapist to have a texture D or E diet specifically, please refer to the guidance to ensure foods are prepared to a safe texture.)

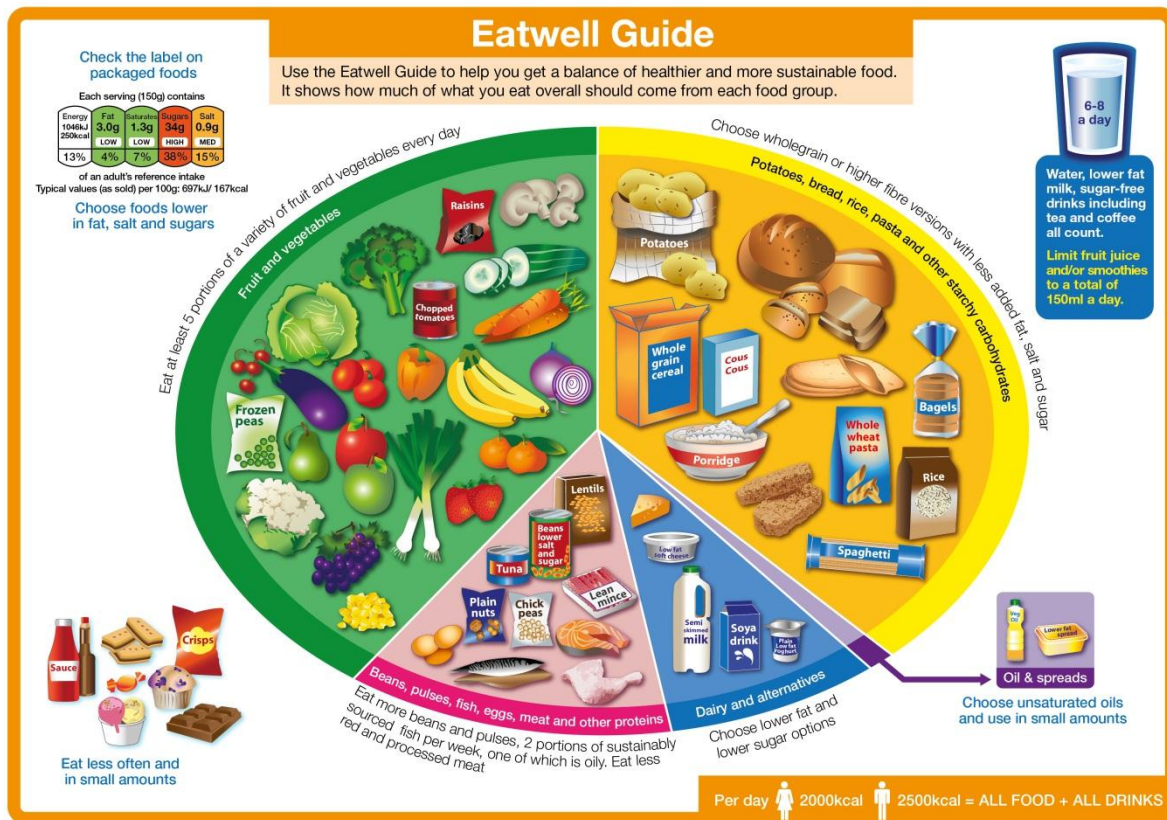
Your daily food guide

It is important that you eat as varied a diet as possible. To ensure your diet includes all the nutrients you require, choose foods from the following food groups:

- Base all your meals on the bread, cereals and potato food group.
- Every day, try to include:
 - 2 servings of soft tender meat, fish or alternatives (e.g. eggs, pulses)
 - 2 servings of milk and dairy foods
 - 5 servings of soft fruit and vegetables
 - Small amounts of foods containing fat and/sugar.
- Drinks, try to drink at least 8-10 cups or glasses of fluid per day (e.g. water, tea, coffee, juice, milk)

This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email pals.team@gwh.nhs.uk

Soft Diet



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Ideas for meals

Breakfast

- Porridge, instant oat cereal, Weetabix or other cereals (no nuts or dried fruit) with milk.
- Scrambled egg (mashed) with butter or margarine.
- Baked beans* or tinned spaghetti (mashed).
- Stewed fruit e.g. apple or apricots, served with yoghurt or fromage frais.
- Coffee made with milk.
- Fruit juice.

(*considered high risk for those on texture D or E diet)

Main meals

- Casseroles and stews. Use lean, chopped meats and cook until tender.
- Minced meats or shepherds pie with gravy (use soya or quorn mince for vegetarian options).
- Lasagne served with sauce or gravy.



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- Corned beef hash, served with a sauce.
- Fish in sauce (boil in the bag), fish pie (potato topping) or fish cakes with sauce.
- Cheese omelette or cauliflower cheese.
- Macaroni cheese or pasta dishes made with small pasta shapes in a creamy sauce.
- Serve with potato mashed with butter or margarine and milk.

Use Worcestershire, soy or curry sauce, mint jelly, tomato or garlic purée to vary the flavour of meals

Vegetables

- Swede, carrots or other root vegetables mashed with butter or margarine or olive oil.
- Broccoli or cauliflower cooked until soft. Use florets (not stalks). Add sauce e.g. cheese or savoury white sauce for variety.
- Ratatouille. Finely chop vegetables and cook until soft.



Vegetables, as with all foods need to be chewed well. If you have difficulty chewing, cook them until soft and use a fork to mash cooked vegetables with sauce or gravy on your plate before eating.

Puddings

- Milk puddings – rice pudding, semolina, tapioca and sago.
- Crème caramel or egg custard.
- Yoghurt or fromage frais.
- Instant whip or mousse.
- Milk jelly or blancmange made with milk
- Stewed apple, rhubarb or pear or mashed bananas served with custard, cream or ice cream.
- Soft tinned fruit e.g. peaches, pears, mandarins served with evaporated milk or custard*.
- Soft sponge pudding mixed with custard to soften.
- Trifle made with moist sponge, soften with fruit juice, custard, jelly, cream and soft fruit*.
- Ice cream with sauce topping.

(*avoid mixed consistencies e.g. fruit & cream if following a texture D or E diet)



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Lighter Meals

- Lentil or split pea soup.
- Soup made with soft vegetables and cooked meat.
- Condensed soups made up with milk.
- Baked beans or tinned spaghetti with grated cheese.
- Jacket potato (avoid the skin) mashed with butter or margarine and served with a soft moist filling e.g. grated cheese, cottage cheese, baked beans, tuna and mayonnaise or minced beef.
- Omelette or scrambled egg mashed with butter or margarine.
- Sandwiches without the crusts, filled with soft moist fillings e.g well mashed salmon, tuna, cream cheese or egg and mayonnaise

Basic White Sauce

290ml($\frac{1}{2}$ pint) milk
20g($\frac{3}{4}$ oz) butter or margarine
20g($\frac{3}{4}$ oz) plain flour

Melt the fat in the pan, add the flour and stir well. Cook gently for 1-2 minutes and remove from the heat. Add the milk a little at a time, stirring well to make a smooth sauce. Return to heat and stir until the sauce boils. Season with salt and pepper.

Cheese Sauce	Add 28g (1oz) grated cheese
Parsley Sauce	Add 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Lemon Sauce	Add zest of 1 lemon (grated)

Suggested eating plan

Breakfast	Porridge or soft breakfast cereal with milk Fruit juice or milky coffee
Mid morning	Milky drink such as Horlicks, Drinking Chocolate or Build Up milkshake
Lunch	Shepherds pie Or flaked fish in sauce Or cheese omelette Served with mashed potato and soft vegetables Yoghurt, sponge and custard, stewed fruit and custard or milk pudding
Mid afternoon	Milky drink or banana mashed with milk



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Tea	Lentil or split pea soup Scrambled egg, mashed potato and soft vegetables Soft cauliflower or macaroni cheese made with small pasta shapes Egg or tuna and mayonnaise sandwiches (without crusts) Full fat yoghurt, Instant Whip or soft fresh fruit and ice cream
Bedtime	Milky drink Soft breakfast cereal with milk

Convenience foods

Ideas for quick and easy meals, sauces and puddings for when you don't feel like cooking or don't have the time.

Frozen foods: Boil in the bag fish in sauce, fish pie (potato topping), lasagne, shepherds pie, frozen vegetables e.g., carrots, broccoli and cauliflower florets, ice cream.

Tinned foods: Macaroni cheese, baked beans, tuna, condensed soup, custard, rice pudding, sponge pudding.

Packet foods: Cheese sauce, Build Up soup, Instant Whip.

Chilled foods: Macaroni/cauliflower cheese, pasta dishes e.g. spaghetti bolognese, yoghurt, mousse, crème caramel, trifle.

Am I eating enough?

Ways of enriching foods

If you find that you are eating smaller amounts of food than usual, or you are losing weight, here are some ideas to add extra nourishment to foods.

- Use whole milk (full fat) or fortified milk – add 4 tablespoons of milk powder to 1 pint of whole milk. Use this fortified milk in place of ordinary milk on cereals, in custards, soups or sauces.
- Add grated cheese, butter, margarine, olive oil or mayonnaise to vegetables, potatoes or scrambled eggs.
- Choose full fat or whole milk varieties of yoghurt such as thick and creamy or Greek style.



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- Add cream to puddings, drinks or soup.
- Add sugar, honey, syrup and seedless jam to cereals, drinks or puddings.

If you cannot face large meals, try to have 3-4 smaller meals daily with nourishing drinks or enriched soups in between.

Nourishing drinks

- Coffee, Ovaltine or Drinking Chocolate made with whole milk.
- Milk shakes, fruit smoothies or drinking yoghurts.
- Build Up or Complan (milkshake powders) made with whole milk.
- Nurishment (canned milkshake).

Weight loss

Weigh yourself regularly. Your weight will give you some idea as to whether you are eating enough.

If you are losing weight, ask your GP or hospital doctor to refer you to the Dietitian.

Prescribable Nutritional Supplements

These are useful for some people and may be offered under guidance from your dietitian or doctor.

Constipation

Constipation can become a problem if you are unable to eat a normal diet. The following may help:

- Drink at least 8 cups of fluid daily such as water, tea, coffee, milk, fruit juice or squash.
- Include vegetables or pulses (beans, peas and lentils) in soups or casseroles.
- Include stewed, tinned or fresh fruit. Try prunes or prune juice 1-2 times daily.

Caution

For some patients fibrous foods may be difficult to swallow even after chewing well and should be avoided. Examples of such foods are orange pith, fruit skins, cauliflower stalks, nuts and dried fruit. Discuss with your dietitian, doctor or specialist nurse.



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Swallowing difficulties

Swallowing difficulties can occur due to a number of medical conditions, including stroke, head injuries and also following surgery.

You may have to change the texture of your food and fluids.

You may also find certain foods difficult to swallow. These high risk foods include:

- Stringy fibrous texture such as pineapple, runner beans, celery and lettuce.
- Vegetable and fruit skins including beans for example broad beans, soya beans, black-eyed peas, grapes and tomatoes.
- Mixed consistency foods, for example cereals which do not blend with milk like muesli, mince with thin gravy and soup with lumps.
- Crunchy foods such as toast, flaky pastry, dry biscuits and crisps.
- Crumbly items such as bread, crust, pie crusts, crumble and dry biscuits.
- Hard biscuits, boiled and chewy sweets and toffees, nuts and seeds.
- Husks such as sweetcorn and granary bread.

For more help with swallowing problems ask your doctor to refer you to a Speech and Language Therapist.

Chewing difficulties

Difficulties in chewing can be a result of changes to the mouth, jaw, tongue or teeth.

- If your mouth is swollen, you may find that you can only manage fluids for the first few days. Try whole (full fat) milk based drinks such as Build Up, warm rather than hot Horlicks or Drinking Chocolate or cold whole milk. After the swelling goes down, you will probably be able to manage soft foods which do not need much chewing. They may be easier if they are of a smooth consistency e.g. smooth purees rather than foods with 'bits' in them.
- There are no foods which you have to avoid – but you will probably find that some foods need to be pureed or liquidised for you to be able to manage them.
- Many people eat less when they have chewing difficulties. You may find it helpful to have a whole (full fat) milk based drink between meals to stop you losing too much weight.
- If your jaw is wired, you will be more limited in the foods you can take because you will not be able to open your jaw and your teeth will act like a sieve. Try thinning foods with sauces, gravy, milk or juice.

If you are having problems with teeth, gums or dentures, then visit your dentist.



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Preparing food to different textures

	Texture D	Texture E
General description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mashed Food is soft, tender, moist. Some variation in texture. Needs minimal chewing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food is soft, tender, moist. Varied textures. Needs some chewing.
Porridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very thick* Smooth consistency No lumps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick** No hard lumps and no lumps bigger than 1.5cm
Cereal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat biscuit cereals fully softened with milk (all milk should be absorbed) 	
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finely mashed fish in very thick* sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flaked fish in thick** sauce
Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minced meat (2mm) in very thick* sauce Very thick casserole/stew/curry using soft and tender meat (needs to be puréed). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender meat casseroles (approx. 1.5cm pieces of meat in thick smooth sauce/gravy).
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewed and mashed fruit. Drain liquid and serve with very thick custard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewed fruit. Drain liquid and serve with thick** custard.
Yoghurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very thick* smooth yoghurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick** smooth yoghurt (tender fruit pieces less than 1.5cm are fine)
Sponge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponge cake with smooth filling. Mash with very thick* smooth custard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponge cake with smooth filling. Mash with thick** smooth custard.
<p>Both textures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bread should not be taken unless advised by a Speech & Language Therapist (SLT) No foods should have thin textures, unless advised safe by a SLT. Avoid hard, tough, chewy, stringy, dry or crumbly 'bits'. Avoid ice cream and jelly if you have been advised to take thickened fluids. <p>*Very thick = holds its shape and cannot be poured. **Thick = small plastic teaspoon should stand upright if the head is completely covered.</p>		

Useful contact

Upper G I Specialist Nurse at RUH, Bath: **01225 821453**

Nutrition and Dietetic Service

Tel: (01225) 824398 (RUH); (01225) 833916 (St Martin's);
(01249) 456512 (Chippenham)

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