



Minced foods for people with dysphagia

UHN

Information for patients and families

Read this booklet to learn about:

- ✓ Dysphagia
- ✓ How to prepare minced foods
- ✓ What foods to choose and avoid
- ✓ A sample daily menu

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Dysphagia

Dysphagia is the medical word for difficulty with chewing and swallowing.

Signs of dysphagia are:

- coughing or choking when eating or drinking
- feeling like food is stuck in your throat
- holding food in your mouth without swallowing
- a gurgly voice after eating

Dysphagia can be serious. If you cannot swallow properly:

- Food and drink may go into your lungs. This can cause problems with breathing or infection.
- You may not be able to eat enough of the right foods to stay healthy and maintain your weight.

How to manage dysphagia

Your health care team recommends that you follow **a minced diet** for dysphagia. This booklet tells you how to do this. You will learn how to prepare minced foods to make swallowing easier and safer.

These tips can also help you to manage dysphagia:

- Have your meal in a quiet place.
- Take your time when eating and drinking.
- Reduce distractions such as turning off the TV when eating and drinking.
- Sit upright during meal times. Remain upright for at least 30 minutes after.
- Do not talk while chewing or swallowing.
- Swallow one mouthful before taking the next.

Minced foods

Minced foods only need a little bit of chewing. They are soft, moist and can be broken down with the tongue.

How to check that food is minced

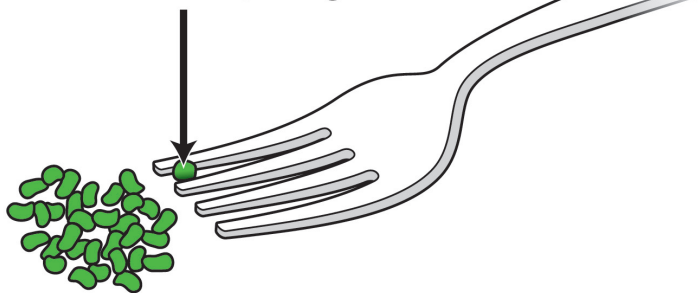
Food that is minced:

- Is made of small pieces 4 millimetres or less
- Can be easily mashed with a fork with a little pressure
- Does not separate into liquid and solid
- Holds its shape on a spoon
- Can be eaten with a fork or spoon
- Is not sticky (falls off when spoon is tilted)

Helpful Tips!

Use the slot between fork prongs to determine whether minced pieces are the correct size

Minced pieces fit
between fork prongs



Preparing minced foods at home

You can prepare minced foods in several ways.

1. Mashing

Some very soft foods like ripe bananas, well cooked potatoes and avocado can be mashed with a fork or masher until smooth. A small amount of liquid may be added to make the food smooth and moist. Check that the mashed food does not separate into a liquid and a solid.

2. Using a knife

- Prepare soft and well-cooked foods from the list on page 8.
- Cut food across into small pieces with a knife so that they are no wider than 4 millimetres in width.
- Turn the pieces of food 90 degrees and make cuts no wider than 4 millimetres in width.
- If needed, continue to chop food into smaller pieces until food is smaller than 4 millimetres in size.
- Add additional moisture with the foods in the table below

3. Using a food processor

- Prepare soft and well-cooked foods from the list on page 8.
- Place food into a food processor
- Use the pulse function to gradually break down food into smaller pieces
- Stop pulsing when minced food is 4 millimetres in width or less
- Add additional moisture with the foods in the table below

How to add moisture to minced foods

Add moisture to foods by adding:

- gravy
- sauce like tomato sauce or a cream sauce
- butter or margarine
- sour cream
- yogurt
- mayonnaise



Helpful Tips!

Keep low sodium instant gravy mix in your pantry for an easy way to add moisture to foods



Remove all liquid that might be released from food when mincing.

Some foods like fruits and vegetables can release liquid when they are being minced. Strain these foods with a fine mesh strainer or blot away extra moisture with a paper towel.

Pureed foods

Pureed foods are also safe for people who need minced foods. Pureed foods do not need chewing. They are completely smooth with no lumps, skins, strings or seeds. Some foods naturally have a pureed texture. You can buy them at the grocery store and they are ready to eat.

These foods include:

- Yogurt
- Smooth puddings
- Smooth hummus
- Apple sauce and other fruit sauces
- Instant cereals like oat bran and cream of wheat
- Baby food

Do not buy foods that have added nuts, seeds, fruit or other chunks.

You can puree most other foods using a blender or food processor.

1. Prepare soft and well-cooked foods from the lists on page 10.
2. Place food in a blender or food processor.
3. Depending on the type of food, add liquid to the blender or food processor.
4. Blend until smooth.
5. Use the checklist on page 7 to make sure the food is pureed.

If any lumps or skins remain, strain the food with a fine mesh strainer.

Adding liquid

To make pureed foods more smooth, you can add:

- water
- juice
- broth
- milk
- gravies
- yogurt
- sauces
- supplement drinks



Do not add too much liquid or the food may be too runny.

How to check that food is pureed



Food that is pureed:

- Holds its shape on a spoon
- Flows very slowly
- Is not sticky (falls off when spoon is tilted)
- Falls off spoon in a single spoonful
- Does not separate into liquid and solid
- Cannot be sucked through a straw

Foods to choose and avoid

	✓ Foods to choose	✗ Foods to avoid
Vegetables and Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minced or mashed cooked vegetables (such as squash, green beans or broccoli) • Minced or mashed canned vegetables • Minced or mashed, canned fruits, drained (such as peaches, or cherries) • Minced or mashed soft fruits (such as berries, bananas or cantaloupe) • Mashed potatoes • Applesauce or other fruit sauces • Fruit or vegetable juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough, raw, or stringy vegetables (such as celery) • Tough, stringy or pulpy fruits (such as pineapple or orange) • Juicy fruits with a lot of liquid (such as watermelon or grapes) • French fries • Coconut • Dried fruit
Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked cereals (such as cream of wheat, oat bran, infant cereal, cream of rice) • Minced or pureed well-cooked pasta or noodles • Pureed congee or rice • Pureed bread, pancakes or muffins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry cereal • Grain products with seeds, nuts or fruit • Crackers, melba toast, rice cakes • Waffles, French toast • Pita bread, tortillas, roti, chapatti • Rice, unless recommended by your health care professional • Bread, unless recommended by your health care professional

	✓ Foods to choose	✗ Foods to avoid
Milk and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth yogurt without fruits, seeds or nuts • Cheese as an ingredient in minced foods • Cottage cheese • Smooth pudding and custard • Milk or soy beverage • Rice pudding, tapioca pudding • Ice cream or sherbet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yogurt with fruit, seeds or nuts • Hard cheeses, soft cheeses, cheese spread and cream cheese (not as an ingredient in minced foods)
Meat and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finely minced meat and poultry without bones, served with sauce to moisten • Minced or mashed cooked, soft fish without bones, served with sauce to moisten • Canned fish with extra mayonnaise • Minced or mashed beans, lentils, chickpeas and other legumes • Mashed soft or silken tofu • Minced scrambled egg • Smooth hummus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeds • Nuts and Nut butter • Tough or stringy cuts of meat • Cuts of meats with bones or gristle • Sausages, hot dogs, weiners
Mixed Dishes and Entrees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minced or mashed casseroles and entrees made with ingredients in this 'Foods to choose' column (such as lasagna, scalloped potatoes, shepherd's pie) • Smooth, pureed soups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dishes or soups with ingredients from this 'Foods to avoid' column, as they do not mince well

	 Foods to choose	 Foods to avoid
Sweets and Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth, pureed desserts without nuts or seeds • Honey, syrups, sugars, seedless jams and jellies • Gelatin desserts (such as Jello) • Ice cream, sherbet, frozen yogurt, popsicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard or soft candies • Cake, cookies
Condiments, Fats and Oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter, margarine, oil • Pureed or smooth gravies and other sauces • Ketchup, smooth mustard, mayonnaise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salad dressings with grainy spices (such as coarse ground pepper, grainy mustard)

Sample daily menu

Here is an example of eating well on a minced diet.

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| Breakfast | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cream of Wheat• Minced scrambled egg with butter• Applesauce• Milk• Tea |
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| Lunch | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minced turkey with gravy• Mashed potatoes with gravy• Minced green beans, cooked until soft and drained• Chocolate pudding• Vanilla Ensure®• Pureed cream of mushroom soup |
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| Afternoon
Snack | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mashed canned peaches, drained• Vanilla yogurt• Water |
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| Dinner | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minced pasta with tomato sauce, minced chicken,
and mashed broccoli• Mashed banana• Pureed Minestrone soup• Milk |
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| Evening
Snack | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cottage cheese• Pureed canned fruit• Water |
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