

MANAGING YOUR:

PUREED DIET

A pureed diet may be necessary for people with chewing or swallowing difficulties. When on a pureed diet, eat as many nutrient-rich and fiber-rich foods as possible.

General Tips

The goal of a pureed diet is to provide foods that can be safely swallowed and enjoyed. The foods in this diet are easy to swallow because their texture is “pudding like” after the food is whipped, blended, mashed, or pureed.²

Recommended foods

- **Fruits**

Pureed fruits (peel and remove seeds before pureeing) such as well-mashed, ripe, fresh avocados or bananas.

- **Vegetables**

Pureed cooked vegetables (with seeds removed if possible, such as in a bell pepper), tomato sauce or tomato paste without seeds.

- **Starchy vegetables**

Cooked potatoes, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, acorn squash, turnips, rutabaga, etc. All peeled, any seeds removed, and mashed or pureed with vegetable stock/broth.

- **Grains and grain products**

Rice, well-cooked pasta, crackers, pancakes, rolls, noodles, and muffins, all pureed with liquid of choice into a pudding consistency. Cooked hot cereal such as smooth or blended oatmeal, baby oatmeal, cream of wheat or farina. Cook with small amounts of liquid to keep moist, but not runny.

- **Non-dairy alternatives and milk products**

Avoid drinking if a thickened liquid diet is ordered. The following can be used to moisten foods that are pureed: soy milk, almond milk, coconut milk, flaxseed milk, hemp milk, cow's milk, and products made from these milks such as yogurt.

- **Protein-rich foods**

Cooked and pureed beans, lentils, peas, tofu or veggie burgers are the best protein-rich foods for a pureed diet. In moderation, beef, pork, chicken, fish, eggs, and other soft meats can be used if desired.²



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Foods to avoid on the pureed diet

- **Grains**

Breads, rolls, crackers, biscuits, pancakes, waffles, French toast, muffins, bread dressing, pasta, noodles, and rice that have not been pureed to pudding consistency. Dry cereals or oatmeal that have not been pureed to pudding consistency. Cooked cereals with lumps, seeds, or chunks.

- **Vegetables**

Fresh, frozen, canned, or dried vegetables that have not been pureed. Tomatoes or tomato sauce with seeds.

- **Fruits**

Whole fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits that have not been pureed. Watermelon with seeds.

- **Non-dairy alternatives and milk products**

Yogurt with pieces of fruits or nuts.

- **Protein-rich Foods**

Whole or ground meats, fish, or poultry. Dried or cooked lentils or legumes that have been cooked, but not mashed or pureed. Cheese, cottage cheese, or peanut butter, unless incorporated into foods and pureed. Fried, scrambled, or hard-cooked eggs unless pureed.

Thickened liquids

If you have trouble swallowing liquids, try Simply Thick,[®] Thick-It,[®] or one of the other brands in the market made to thicken liquids. You can also purchase pre-thickened drinks from pharmacies, medical supply stores, and online. You can also partially freeze liquids to form slush which can be easier to swallow. Speak with a healthcare professional to determine if you need thickened liquids and what consistency you need.

NOTE: Hydration is an important part of a healthy intake. Make sure to drink enough water to stay hydrated within your medical providers recommendations.

How to puree food

1. Remove stems, stalks, seeds, pits and skins.
2. Cut food into small pieces.
3. Cook food until soft and tender. (Canned or thawed frozen foods, such as canned or frozen peaches, may not need further cooking).¹
4. Food processors, blenders, or mashers are helpful tools in pureeing foods.
5. Do not fill the food processor or blender more than 2/3 full. Hold a towel on top of the food processor/blender cover to prevent the food from coming out the top of the machine.
6. Add small amounts of liquid to form a drinkable, pudding-like consistency.
7. Cover and reheat the foods in an oven, steamer, or stovetop before serving.³

Increasing calories in the diet

To add calories to your diet, try the following tips:

- Add baby food fruit to juices, smoothies, and hot cereals. (Baby food alone is usually too thin for most people with swallowing difficulties to consume, and it does not contain enough nutrients for adults needs. However, it can be added to recipes to help increase the calories in the food.¹
- Rather than serving broth, purée vegetable soup or bean soup and use baby food vegetables as part of the liquid.
- Serve gravies or sauces made with puréed beans or blended soft tofu over potatoes.
- Blend refried beans, pureed beans/lentils, or silken tofu into soy or rice milk, and use this thickened milk when preparing soups, sauces, casseroles, or puddings.¹

Many healthy foods work well for texturally altered diets. No texture changes are needed for applesauce, mashed potatoes, refried beans (thinned with a bit of tomato juice, if needed), or hummus. Other healthy foods are easily altered for chopped or puréed diets. For example, most soups, cooked beans, butternut or banana squash, cooked root vegetables (such as beets, rutabagas, and carrots), or potatoes (including white, yellow, sweet, and purple) can be run through a blender or food mill to create a hearty and correctly textured base for a chopped or puréed meal.

Resources

1. *Texture Alterations for Vegan Diets* by Chef Nancy Berkoff, RD, EdD *Vegetarian Journal* 2009. Issue 2
2. *Dysphagia Level 1: Pureed Foods. Nutrition Care Manual. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.*
3. *Simply Thick Puree Guidelines.*

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your Landmark provider or primary care physician.

The information provided herein is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment for specific medical conditions. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease without consulting with a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your condition.



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