



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust



Helpful tips for people
following a **Soft Diet**

Why do I need a soft diet?

Due to the treatment you are having, you may find softer foods easier to manage if your mouth or throat is sore.

This leaflet is to help you enjoy everyday foods by making them easier for you to eat.

If you have a swallowing problem or feel food is sticking, you should talk to your doctor/ nurse or Speech and Language Therapist.

How to prepare soft foods

1. Make sure all foods are well cooked.
2. Make everyday food softer by finely chopping, mashing or mincing it.
3. Expensive equipment is not needed.

Simple utensils can work just as well.

For example use:

Forks - to mash soft foods eg. banana

Potato mashers - to remove lumps in potatoes, vegetables or fruit

Sieves and spoons - to remove lumps in soup, gravy or milky puddings

4. A blender or liquidizer can be used if available.
5. Chew your food well before swallowing.
6. If possible sit up straight when eating.
7. Eat slowly and relax.



Serving Hints

- Add sauce, milk, butter, margarine, gravy etc to your food to make it easier to swallow.
- Avoid eating dry foods.
- Make meals as attractive as possible. Use colour to make meals look appealing. Serve bright coloured, mashed vegetables (eg. carrots, turnip, baked beans) with paler foods, such as creamed potato and minced chicken.
- If your mouth is sore you may not be able to cope with strong flavours

The addition of herbs and spices such as pepper, garlic, lemon, tomato, mint, mustard, curry, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, citrus fruits and fruit juices may make your mouth worse.

- Take a drink with your meal if it helps.
- Making several meals and freezing them in plastic containers may save time

The advice in this leaflet may not be suitable if you follow a 'special diet' for conditions such as diabetes, coeliac disease or have a food allergy – please speak to your Dietitian or GP if concerned.



What foods should I choose?

A variety of foods is the key to good nutrition and helps to maintain your weight.

Each day, try to have the following foods to ensure a balanced diet.

- One pint of full cream milk (blue top)
- Two portions of meat/poultry/fish/cheese/eggs
- A serving of bread/cereal/ potatoes/rice/pasta at each meal time.
- Soft vegetables as tolerated.
- Fruit/glass of fruit juice as tolerated.
- Sweet snacks such as cakes and buns



Ideas for soft meals:

Breakfast Fruit juice or mashed/liquidized fruit (as tolerated)

Porridge served with milk, cream, honey and/or sugar

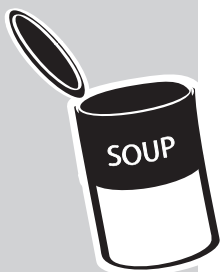
Cereals such as Cornflakes, Branflakes or Weetabix soaked well in warm or cold milk to help soften them

Hard boiled eggs mashed well with mayonnaise or butter

Scrambled egg/poached egg

Thick and creamy yoghurt





Main Meals

Soups

All soups can be strained or liquidized.

Try thick soups such as lentil, broth, potato and leek, split pea.

Condensed and packet soups can be made more nourishing by adding full cream milk, milk powder or cream.

Potatoes

Mashed or creamed potatoes with full cream milk and butter added

Inside of a baked potato with grated cheese, corned beef or baked beans.



Meats and Poultry

Remove bones, skin and gristle. Use tender meat. The butcher can mince this for you if you need. Try: shepherd's pie, meat loaf, corned beef hash, minced chicken or ham in a carbonara or cream sauce, meat pastes, ravioli or spaghetti bolognese. These can be homemade or bought already prepared.

Fish

Remove any visible skin and bones.

Fish can be steamed, baked or microwaved and then flaked.

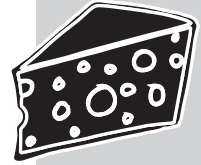
Try: Tinned fish eg. tuna, salmon, sardines and pilchards, Ready-made fisherman's pie.

Serve fish with a savoury sauce such as white sauce, parsley sauce, tomato sauce or cheese sauce.



Cheese

Cheddar, Cottage, Edam, Gouda can be added to soups, potatoes, sauces and vegetables, or served as a main meal.



eg. cottage cheese, macaroni cheese, cauliflower cheese and cheese and potato pie are all soft options.

Eggs

Boiled, scrambled, poached or as an omelette are all suitable. Make sure these are all cooked well.

Pasta/Rice

Soft pasta dishes such as lasagne, macaroni cheese, ravioli or spaghetti bolognese either home-made or bought ready prepared.



Vegetables

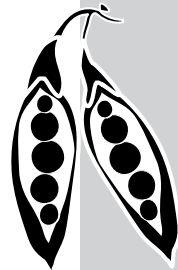
Fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables, cooked until soft.

Mash with a fork or potato masher to make them easier to swallow. Try adding vegetables to casseroles or sauces.

Pulses

Lentils, beans and peas can be added to stew, soups and casseroles.

Cook until very soft.



Puddings/Deserts

Fruit

(as tolerated) Tinned or stewed fruit can be mashed or liquidized if needed and served with a little syrup or natural fruit juice.

Fresh fruit must be peeled and seeds or pips removed before eating e.g. banana, apple, pear, plum or grapes.

If your mouth is sore you may not be able to tolerate citrus fruits and fruit juices

Puddings and Desserts

Hot or cold milky puddings – home-made, tinned or packet varieties are all suitable eg. custard, rice, semolina, tapioca and sago.

Instant desserts – Angel Delight, Instant Whip, mousses, fromage frais, yoghurt (strained if necessary), Crème Caramel, smooth ice cream, jelly, trifle or blancmange.



Suggested Meal Plan

Breakfast Glass of fruit juice
Porridge/Weetabix (made with milk)
Scrambled egg
Cup of tea/coffee

Mid Morning Glass of milk

Lunch Soup (strained or liquidized if needed)

Mashed potato, minced chicken and soft/mashed vegetables served with gravy.

Pudding eg. smooth ice cream and mashed tinned fruit

Mid Afternoon Fromage frais
Cup of tea and soft, crumbly biscuit

Evening Meal Lasagne/baked potato (no skin) with grated cheese/macaroni cheese
Pudding eg. custard, rice pudding served with soft/mashed fruit.

Supper Warm, milky drink eg. Horlicks/Ovaltine/hot chocolate
Crème caramel.

What if I lose weight?

If your appetite is poor or you are unable to take enough food to maintain your weight, the following tips may be useful:

- Try going for a short walk before meals to help increase your appetite
- Have small, regular meals and snacks – ‘little and often’
- Add sugar or glucose powder to food where possible (unless you have diabetes)
- Make foods such as soup, mashed potato, sauces and milk puddings more nourishing by mixing in milk powder, cream, evaporated milk, grated cheese or butter/margarine where appropriate
- Add four tablespoons of dried milk powder (eg. Marvel or supermarket brand) to one pint of full cream milk and use as normal milk.

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