

Patient information factsheet

Level 7 diet (easy to chew)

Patient's name: _____ Date: _____

We have given you this factsheet because a speech and language therapist (SLT) has advised that you should follow a level 7 diet (easy to chew). It explains what a level 7 easy to chew diet is and which foods you should avoid.

What is a level 7 diet?

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) is a global initiative to improve the lives of people living with dysphagia (swallowing difficulties). They have produced a framework based on the consistency of food and fluid. The IDDSI framework is made up of levels and describes food textures and drink thickness. Level 7 is easy to chew.



The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016 iddsi.org/framework

We will only recommend that you follow this diet if:

- it has been prescribed or recommended by your doctor
- you have a strong enough chewing ability to break down soft and tender foods into pieces without help
- you have no increased risk of choking
- you do not have swallowing problems
- you are safe to eat without supervision

For people who need supervision at mealtimes, the level 7 diet should only be followed under the strict recommendations and written guidance of a qualified health professional.

Patient information factsheet

What are easy to chew foods?

- Easy to chew foods are normal, everyday foods which are soft or tender.
- These foods can be eaten with your fingers, cutlery or chopsticks.
- You should be able to bite off pieces of these foods, chew them and then swallow them without tiring easily.
- Your tongue should be able to move these foods around in your mouth until they are soft and moist enough to be swallowed easily.
- You should be able to break these foods apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon. To check whether the food is soft enough, press down on it with the back of a fork until your thumb nail starts to turn white. If the food can be squashed and does not return to its original shape then it is soft enough.

Examples of easy to chew foods

- Meat cooked until tender.
- Fish cooked until soft enough to break apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon.
- Fruit soft enough to break apart into smaller pieces with the side of a fork or spoon, such as ripe banana. Do not eat the fibrous parts of fruits, such as the white parts of an orange. Be extra careful if you are eating fruit with a high water content, such as melon.
- Vegetables steamed or boiled until tender. Stir fried vegetables are **not** suitable.
- Cereal soaked in milk. Drain any excess liquid before serving.
- Rice.

Please check with us about eating bread and sandwich fillings.

Foods to avoid

- Hard or dry foods, such as nuts, dry cereal, bread, dry cakes and raw vegetables (carrot, cauliflower and broccoli).
- Tough or fibrous foods, such as steak or pineapple.
- Chewy foods, such as lollies, sweets, cheese chunks, marshmallows, chewing gum, sticky mashed potato, dried fruits and sticky foods.
- Crispy foods, such as crackling, crispy bacon and cornflakes.
- Crunchy foods, such as raw carrot, raw apple and popcorn.
- Sharp or spiky foods, such as crisps or corn chips.
- Pips and seeds, such as apple seeds, pumpkin seeds and white strings of oranges.
- Bone or gristle, such as chicken bones, fish bones and meat with gristle.
- Sticky or gummy food, such as edible gelatine and sticky rice cakes.
- Stringy food, such as runner beans and rhubarb.

Contact us

Department of dietetics/speech and language therapy
University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
Telephone: **023 8120 6072**

Useful links

www.iddsi.org

For a translation of this document, or a version in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **023 8120 4688**.

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalneeds**