

IDDSI Level 4 Thick Puree



Information and advice about modifying diets for someone with swallowing difficulties

IDDSI Diet 4: Extremely thick drinks/pureed food

This texture is recommended because you may find it hard to swallow or get tired easily, or you may be at risk of choking or of getting chest infections when eating more solid foods. Everyday foods can be adapted to make them suitable for a thick puree diet by adding a thick sauce and blending them down to a smooth consistency.

What is extremely thick pureed food?

 Smooth, no lumps	Food is smooth and moist with no lumps. It is not sticky.
 No chewing	No biting or chewing is required.
 Can be eaten with a fork	It is usually eaten with a spoon but can be eaten with a fork because it does not drop through.
 Holds its shape	It falls off spoon in a single spoonful when tilted. It continues to hold shape on a plate. It can be piped layered or moulded. It cannot be poured, drunk from a cup or sucked through a straw.
 No hard pieces	No hard pieces, crust or skin have formed during cooking or standing.

How do I prepare extremely thick pureed food?

- You can puree food using a blender, food processor or it can be mashed with a fork then sieved. It is important that it tastes, looks, and smells good.
- Cut food into small chunks before processing.
- Remove tough skins and large seeds before blending.
- Always puree dry foods with extra liquids such as gravy, milk or stock (try not to use water as this reduces the goodness in the food).
- Fluid in or on food must match your recommended fluid thickness.
- Puree small quantities at a time to avoid lumps.
- A thickener may be added to maintain thickness.
- Fluid/gravy/sauce/custard in or on the food that has not thinned out or separated off.

The presentation of extremely thick pureed food is very important to encourage appetite.

- Do not puree a whole meal together as it looks less appetising.
- It is a good idea to puree each food separately so that there are individual portions of each food on the plate. This helps each part of the food to keep its taste and colour.
- Pureed food can be put on a plate with an ice-cream scoop or by piping it through different nozzles in different shapes or using food or jelly moulds to make it look tasty.
- As the food looks different it is important to be told what it is before you eat it.

Testing food to make sure it is safe

- **Spoon tilt test:** Food holds its shape on a spoon and falls off easily when tilted or lightly flicked (should not be firm or sticky).
- **Fork drip test:** Extremely thick liquids sit in a mound or pile above the fork. Liquid does not dollop, or drip continuously through the fork prongs.



How can I give my meals more flavour?

Try to match meats to traditional flavours/sauces:

- Pork with apple sauce
- Beef with mustard or horseradish sauce
- Lamb with mint or onion sauce
- Turkey with cranberry sauce
- Fish with tartare or parsley sauce

Or use other sauces and flavours such as white / red wine, curry, tomato, cheese, marmite, peanut butter (smooth)

Try to add flavours to milk drinks e.g., tea, coffee, drinking chocolate, Horlicks
Flavour cold drinks or go for smoothies or milkshakes

Try yoghurt drinks for more nutrition.

Soups

Make sure soup has no 'bits' and try adding:

- 1 tablespoon (15g) of milk powder to a bowl of soup
- 1-2oz (25-50g) of grated cheese
- Cooked beans or lentils – remember to liquidise and pass through a sieve first
- Cream, natural yoghurt or evaporated milk
- Make up a packet / tinned soups with fortified milk instead of water.

Top Tips:

- Eat small, frequent meals; 6 meals a day may be easier to manage than 3 large ones, avoiding general and swallowing fatigue
- Vary the flavours in your diet to help your appetite
- Have 6-8 nourishing drinks a day
- It may be easier to cook extra and freeze it for another day
- If your safe swallow plan includes thickened drinks, please make sure that you do not have any thin runny fluids in any of your foods either. If necessary, these may also be thickened.



Meal	Savoury Menu Idea	Sweet menu Idea
Breakfast	▪ Creamy mashed scrambled egg with no lumps ▪ Pureed cheese omelette (avoid stringy cheese)	▪ Porridge sieved without lumps with honey ▪ Mashed Weetabix soaked in warm milk
Morning snack	▪ Smooth guacamole or houmous ▪ Pureed smooth quiche	▪ Thick, smooth banana milkshake ▪ Smooth yoghurt
Lunch	Pureed: ▪ Shepherd's pie (avoid peas and sweetcorn) ▪ Cottage pie (avoid peas and sweetcorn) ▪ Stews ▪ Corned beef hash ▪ Lasagne (without crispy cheese topping) ▪ Pureed Dahl	▪ Angel Delight ▪ Ready-Brek with smooth jam mixed in
Afternoon snack	▪ Pureed baked beans ▪ Creamy mashed scrambled egg with no lumps on toast pureed	▪ Pureed fruit, e.g., mango, tinned peaches, or pears (avoid seeded fruits e.g., raspberries and fruit skin) ▪ Pureed cake and cream – no lumps
Dinner	▪ Pureed pasta with sauces such as cheese, Bolognese, mushroom, and creamy tomato (add sauce to pasta and then puree together) ▪ Thick, pureed smooth soup ▪ Pureed Thai green curry	▪ Pureed semolina or rice pudding with honey ▪ Pureed apple (make sure peeled apples) crumble and custard
Dessert/Supper	▪ Pureed vegetables (avoid stringy vegetables e.g., green beans) ▪ Pureed swede/carrot mash	▪ Stewed fruits (pureed no skin) ▪ Chocolate mousse

If you have any concerns regarding your diet or need to follow a special diet due to a medical condition, please speak to your GP who may refer you to a dietitian.

What foods are difficult

Please note: If you are on thickened fluids, please check with your Speech & Language Therapist about whether or not it is safe to eat ice cream or jelly.

If you have any concerns regarding your diet or need to follow a special diet due to a medical condition, please speak to your GP who may refer you to a dietician.



Vegetables not advised for purée are those with:
Husks and skins e.g., sweet corn, bean and peas
'Stringy' texture e.g., leeks and celery
Salad products, for example:

- Lettuce
- Cucumber
- Raw tomatoes



- Grapes
- Raw apples
- Cherries
- Oranges/Mandarins
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Kiwi fruit
- Raw pears/hectarines



- Biscuits and cookies
- Desserts coated in coconut
- Flaky pastries
- Fruit crumble
- Chocolate with nuts and fruit
- Rice pudding
- Yogurt with lumps

If you require a high calorie diet for weight gain here is some advice on how to fortify your foods and drinks

Tips

- Eat 3 small meals and 3 snacks each day
- Have milky drinks in-between meals such as: 'all-milk' coffee, hot chocolate, Horlicks or milkshakes

Adding extra calories (Fortifying)

- Fortify 1 pint of full fat milk with 2 – 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder and use throughout the day for all drinks (including milkshakes) and puddings
- Use full fat dairy products such as full fat milk, creamy yoghurts and cheese
- Add 1 tablespoon of skimmed milk powder to foods like porridge or puddings
- Add cream, butter, cheese or mayonnaise to foods like mashed potato or vegetables before blending
- Add extra sugar, syrup or honey to puddings, cereal or into drinks



100 calorie boosters

These add 100 calories when added to foods:

- 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise or oil
- A small handful of grated cheese
- 2 tablespoons of salad cream
- 2 tablespoons of honey, lemon curd or golden syrup

Suggested meal ideas (high calorie)

Breakfast

- Pureed porridge or Ready brek, or Weetabix made into a puree consistency (made with full fat fortified milk, sugar, and double cream)
- Thick and creamy yoghurt with honey, syrup or lemon curd
- Fruit smoothie
- Pureed scrambled egg cooked with double cream and melted cheese

Light meals

- Smooth creamy soup e.g.: meat, potatoes, vegetables (blended and sieved /no bits)
- Pureed cauliflower cheese made with a thick creamy cheese sauce
- Pureed boiled /scrambled eggs with pureed baked beans



Main meals (served with pureed vegetables)

- Pureed meat / fish stew
- Pureed mince or tender roasted meat in gravy
- Pureed fish pie/fish in cheese and parsley sauce
- Pureed meat, fish or lentil curry
- Pureed tuna pasta with mayonnaise



Snacks

- Smooth dip or smooth pate
- Custard pot, smooth creamy yoghurt, or smooth pudding

Desserts

- Instant whip or Angel Delight
- Crème caramel
- Trifle with pureed fruit (however, please be aware that jelly is not recommended for those on thickened fluids)
- Pureed rice pudding or semolina
- Pureed sponge and custard / sauce
- Pureed banana custard



Speech and Language Therapy Department
Norwich Community Hospital, Bowthorpe Road,
Norwich, NR2 3TU
Tel: 01603 216021

Community Dietetic Department
Thorpe Health Centre, St Williams Way,
Norwich, NR7 0AJ
Tel: 01603 216021



Tell us what you think and
help us improve our service.

Where can I go for more information?

Your local speech and language therapist will be able to provide you with more information.
For more information about IDDSI please visit the following website: <https://iddsi.org/>

Accessible formats

If you would like this publication in **large print**, **Braille**, an **alternative format**, or in a **different language**, please contact us on **0800 088 4449** and we will do our best to help.



Feedback

If you have any queries about our services, or would like to provide feedback, please contact our **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**:

- **Telephone:** 0800 088 4449
 - **Email:** eec.pals@nhs.net.
 - **Opening hours:** Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm
-

Friends and Family Test

You can also tell us how likely you are to recommend our service to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment. Your feedback helps our staff understand what they are doing well and where improvements can be made.

Ask a member of staff for a **Friends and Family Test form**, or visit:
eastofenglandcommunityhealthandcare.nhs.uk/patient-experience/patient-advice-and-liaison-service-pals/

Produced by: East of England Community Health & Care NHS Trust
Date of publication: August 2026
Leaflet review date: August 2027 **Version:** 1