

IDDSI Level EC7

Regular “Easy to Chew” 7

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.



What is “easy to chew” food	
 Soft/tender foods	Foods that are soft/tender enough that they are safe to chew and swallow without tiring easily.
 Sometimes needs a sauce	Foods should be well cooked and may need to be moistened with sauce or gravy
 Bite-sized pieces	You should be able to “bite-off” pieces or choose bite sizes that are safe to chew and swallow.
 Easily moved and squashed with your tongue	Your tongue should be able to move and squash the food until it is soft and moist enough to be easily swallowed.

Why is this food texture level used for adults?

Easy to Chew food may be used if you have strong enough chewing ability to break down soft/tender foods into pieces without help, you have no increased risk of choking and do not have swallowing problems. This texture may be right for you if you usually choose to eat soft food, have weaker chewing muscles for hard/firm textures, but can chew soft and tender food without tiring easily. It may also be a good choice if you have been sick and are recovering strength.

Who should not have this texture level?

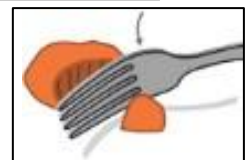
This level is not intended for people where there is an identified increased risk of choking. People who are unsafe to eat without supervision are not considered suitable for this texture level. People can be unsafe to eat without supervision because of chewing and swallowing problems and/or unsafe mealtime behaviours. Examples of unsafe mealtime behaviours include: not chewing very much, putting too much food into the mouth, eating too fast or swallowing large mouthfuls of food. Always consult with your health professional for specific advice for your needs, requests and requirements for supervision.

How do I prepare easy to chew food?

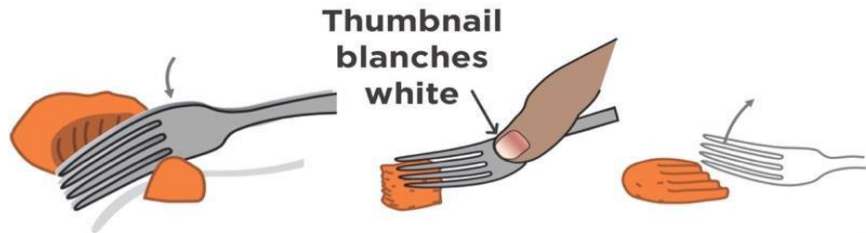
Easy to chew options are prepared in the same way as your ordinary foods. You should choose the soft, tender options for your meals and avoiding anything hard, crunchy, crispy, tough or chewy. This is because you may be getting tired when chewing and eating less or are at risk of food going down the 'wrong way'.

Testing food to make sure it is safe

- **Fork pressure test** - Press down on the fork until the **thumbnail blanches white**, then lift the fork to see if the food is completely squashed and does not regain its shape.
- Must be able to break food apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon.



7 EASY TO CHEW



Must be able to break food apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon

Easy to Chew foods must break apart easily and pass Fork Pressure Test!

IDDSI Fork Pressure Test

To make sure the food is soft enough, press down on the fork until the thumb nail blanches to white, then lift the fork to see that the food is completely squashed and does not regain its shape

Dos

- Normal, everyday foods of soft and tender texture.
- Any method may be used to eat these foods (for example fingers, fork, spoon or chopsticks)
- Foods may be a range of sizes, there is no size limit or recommendation.
- You should be able to 'bite off' pieces of soft and tender food.
- Choose bite-sizes that are **easy to chew and swallow**.
- You should be able to chew pieces of soft and tender food, so they are safe to swallow without becoming tired.
- May include 'mixed thin and thick texture' food and liquids together unless otherwise advised by your Speech and Language Therapist.
- Foods should be able to be **cut or broken apart with the side of a fork or spoon**. A knife is not required to cut this food.

Don'ts

- Do not use foods that are hard and tough such as apples.
- Do not use foods that are chewy, fibrous or have stringy textures.
- Do not use foods that have outer shells such as tomatoes, peas or grapes, or pips / seeds, bones or gristle.

What foods are safe?



Meat and alternatives

How to prepare:

- Meat should be cooked until tender, if you cannot serve soft and tender, serve as minced and moist. Meat may need to be served in thick smooth gravy or sauce e.g. soft stews and casseroles
- Fish should be cooked soft enough to break apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon.

Ideas include:

- Processed meats that don't require much chewing e.g. wafer thin ham / chicken, liver sausage
- Sausages with the skin removed.
- Fish in thick white sauce, canned fish e.g. tuna or salmon
- Eggs: scrambled, boiled, poached, omelette, quiche without the base or fried (with no crispy bits)
- Tofu, Quorn, pâté.



Breads, cereals, pasta and rice

- Check with your Speech and Language Therapist for direction about bread and sandwiches (and appropriate sandwich fillings)
- Porridge / Ready Brek
- Cereals if well soaked in milk with the milk drained off before eating e.g. cornflakes
- Pasta with a sauce e.g. spaghetti in a tomato sauce
- Well cooked rice in a sauce e.g. wet curries.



Milk and dairy

- Milk, milkshakes, mousse, ice cream ** If you are on thickened fluids, please check with your Speech & Language Therapist before eating ice cream or jelly.
- Very thick boiled custard, baked custard
- Cheese: melted, grated, chopped. Ricotta, cottage cheese, cream cheese.
- Smooth plain and fruit yoghurts (without bits in)
- Tinned rice pudding.



Fruit and vegetables

How to prepare:

- Fruit and veg should be soft enough to break apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon (drain any excess liquid).
- Do not use any fibrous parts of the fruit or veg (for example the white parts of an orange).
- Be careful when eating fruit where the juice separates from the solid in the mouth during chewing (for example melon).

Examples:

- Fresh fruit such as apples, pears and plums can be stewed or poached and skin removed.
- Canned fruit can be used (without stones).
- Dried fruit should be soaked and stewed.
- Boiled potatoes, mashed potatoes or jacket potatoes without skin
- Soft cooked broccoli or cauliflower
- Well-cooked and soft vegetables cooked for an extra-long time e.g. pumpkin, carrots, sweet potato (without the skin), parsnip
- Tinned chopped tomatoes (be careful of skins or stem end of the tomato)
- Tinned mushy peas.



Other

- Biscuits dunked in tea/coffee
- Jelly (do not eat jelly if you have been recommended thickened fluids).
- Sugar, sweetener, golden syrup, treacle,
- Chocolate, if slightly softened in microwave
- Very thick gravy, sauces (tomato, soy, Worcestershire, white sauce)
- Rice Pudding
- Soft sponge cake

What foods are difficult?

These foods can be especially hard to chew or swallow so need to be avoided or specially prepared so that they are soft to eat. Please discuss them with your SLT.

Dry Food Crackers, cake, brown bread

Crumbly foods Biscuits, pie crust, wheat

Hard foods Boiled sweets, nuts.

Tough or chewy foods Steak, bacon, harder vegetables.

Crispy or crunchy foods Crisps, flaky pastry.

Stringy or fibrous foods Pineapple, celery

Pips, seeds, pith/inside skin. No skin or outer shells Peas, grapes, fruit skins or husks like sweetcorn

Skin, bone or gristle

Round or long shaped foods Sausages, grapes, sweets, hard chunks, pieces of apple.

Juicy food where juice separates off in the mouth Melon

Floppy foods Lettuce, thinly sliced cucumber, spinach

Sticky foods Some cheeses, marshmallows

Mixing solid with liquid Hard cereal with milk fruit salad with juice and soup with food pieces

Nutrition Support for IDDSI L7 Easy to Chew Diet

Meals and snacks can be made more nutritious, without increasing the quantity, by fortifying or enriching them. This means adding foods high in protein, vitamins and minerals as well as energy (calories). Every mouthful should be as nutritious as possible.

Low-fat and reduced calorie varieties of foods should be avoided as the aim is to increase calories as much as possible. Use full fat and full sugar products instead.



7	How you can fortify your food	
Add smooth peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter or ground almonds		
Add taramasalata, salmon pate or mackerel pate		
Add houmous, avocado, guacamole or pesto		

Add grated hard cheese or a spoonful of soft cheese e.g. mascarpone or ricotta or full fat cream cheese spread	
Add skimmed milk powder or full cream powder such as Marvel or Nido, or supermarket own brand	
Add thick and creamy full fat yoghurt, full fat crème fraiche or ice cream	
Add full fat mayonnaise, salad cream or white sauce	
For an extra boost of energy these calorific foods can be useful:	
Add double cream, coconut cream, evaporate milk or condensed milk	

Add margarine, butter and oil e.g. olive oil rapeseed oil, sunflower oil	
Take care with sweetened foods if you have diabetes	
Add sugar, jam, honey, syrup, lemon curd (unless you have diabetes)	
Add chocolate, toffee, strawberry sauce (unless you have diabetes)	
Add chocolate spread or biscuit spread (unless you have diabetes)	

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- **Telephone:** 0800 088 4449
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- **Opening hours:** Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm

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