



Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust



## **Soft and bite-sized**

Information for patients,  
relatives and carers

# Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

My **speech therapist's** name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## SLT recommendations

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Dietetics

My **dietitian's** name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dietary recommendations

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Berkshire Healthcare Speech & Language Therapists 0118 938 2136

Berkshire Healthcare Dietitians

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## Why do I need to have a soft and bite-sized diet?

Your swallow has been assessed by a qualified speech and language therapist. The assessment revealed that if you eat food that is not soft and bite-sized you will be at increased risk of one or more of the following:

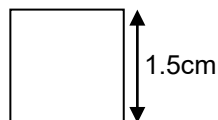
- Choking/coughing.
- Repeated chest infections.
- Pneumonia.
- Weight loss.

## What is a soft and bite-sized diet?

- Food that does not need a knife to cut it.
- Chewing is required before swallowing.
- Soft, tender and moist with no separate thin fluid.
- Bite-sized pieces (maximum size is 1.5cm piece).
- Meat and fish should be cooked until tender. If soft & bite-sized pieces cannot be achieved consider puréeing\*.
- Lentils and beans should be well cooked and mashed or sieved to remove husks.
- Rice should soft enough for it to be mashed with a fork and held together with a thick sauce.
- Regular Bread should be avoided unless specific recommendations have been provided by your SLT.

## How to test if food is suitable

- Fork & spoon pressure – can be cut into small pieces with the side of a fork or spoon.
- Chopsticks – can be used to break this texture food into small pieces.
- Bite-sized – No bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm.



## **\*Best way to purée food**

To achieve a smooth pureed consistency use a powerful food processor or a good quality hand blender. You may have to soak cereals overnight and slow cook meat until very soft and tender before blending. Use a sieve to remove any lumps or skins. Always ensure any liquid is blended into the food and do not separate. Use caution when using a potato masher or ricer as these may allow lumps and grains/husks to get through. For a smooth consistency always sieve food when using the latter.

## **Tips for safe eating and drinking**

- Follow any advice you have been given by your speech and language therapist and dietitian.
- Sit upright while eating. Do not lie back or lie down whilst eating or drinking.
- Keep any distractions to a minimum while you are eating or drinking. Turn off the TV and don't talk while eating or drinking.
- Take your time, do not hurry.
- If you feel tired, stop eating. It is better to have smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day rather than one large meal.

## **Warning signs**

If you experience one or more of the signs below please contact your speech and language therapist:

- Choking, coughing and/or throat clearing during or soon after eating and drinking.
- Breathing problems or skin colour change when eating and drinking.
- A wet or gurgly voice after swallowing food or drinks.
- Recurrent raised temperature (i.e. signs of a fever).
- Frequent chest infections.
- Frequent urine infections.
- Loss of food or drink from your mouth.
- Pouching of food in your mouth.
- Weight loss.



Eating a balanced diet will help to provide the nutrients that your body needs. Try to have variety of foods every day, including some from each of the food groups in the following table.

## Soft and bite-sized diet suggestions



### Meat, poultry and eggs

- Tinned ravioli.
- Quiche (soft and tender, moist pastry with thick sauce or gravy).
- Well boiled or cooked ham.
- Casseroled skinless sausage and vegetables.
- Scrambled or boiled or fried egg.
- Spaghetti Bolognese or curry or dahl.
- Thick soup.
- Smooth meat pâté, mashed into full fat cream cheese or plain full fat yoghurt.

***Avoid: Meat chops, gristle and fatty or stringy meat, bacon, hard lumps.***

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## Fish and seafood

- Fish poached and served in butter or parsley sauce.
- Finely mashed tuna mayo.
- Cream cheese/smooth salmon mousse.
- Smooth fish pâté mashed into full fat cream cheese or plain full fat yoghurt.
- Taramasalata.

***Avoid: Fish with bones and skin.***



## Lentils and beans

- Puréed lentil curry.
- Bean stew.
- Add to soups/casseroles.

***Avoid: Beans with tough skins/husks, sweetcorn, peas, broad beans.***



## Fruit and vegetables

- Root vegetables such as swede, sweet potato, potato, carrots with gravy or cheesy/cream sauce.
- Thick soup.
- Steamed cauliflower or broccoli, with gravy or cheese sauce.
- Casseroled vegetables / bubble and squeak (potato and softly cooked sprouts).
- Mashed or stewed fruit such as apple / banana.
- Mashed soft avocado with full fat cream cheese.
- Seedless fruit with yoghurt.
- Use puréed tomatoes or passata.

***Avoid: Vegetables with non-removable skin, seeds, stalks or fibres, e.g. celery, sweetcorn, peas, fruit juices with bits, tomatoes with skins and pips, hard lumps, stir fried vegetables.***

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## Cheese and dairy products

- Finely grated cheese.
- Wensleydale / Lancashire cheese.
- Cottage cheese.
- Soft cream cheese **or** soft cheese triangles.
- Crème fraîche.
- Plain and flavoured yoghurt.
- Double cream.
- Béchamel / cheese sauces.
- Fortified milky drinks.
- Smooth thick and creamy yoghurt or fromage frais.

***Avoid: Hard cheeses that don't pass the fork test (see page 2).***

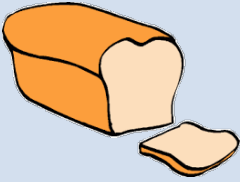


## Rice and cereal

- Weetabix, Shreddies, porridge or Bran Flakes well soaked in hot milk.
- Ready Brek, instant porridges.
- Ground rice pudding.

***Avoid: muesli, granola, cereals with dried fruit, nuts and seeds.***





## Bread

- Pre-gelled 'soaked' open sandwiches (***please speak to your SLT or dietitian about Pre-gelled bread***) that are very moist and gelled through the entire thickness with a soft and bite-sized filling such as: Tuna/egg mayo, Marmite, Avocado, Nutella.

***Avoid: Regular / dried bread.***



## Desserts

- Ground rice/semolina pudding.
- Trifle with soft raspberries
- Sponge pudding and custard
- Tinned raspberries/strawberries with whipped cream.
- Sponge cake/crumble soaked in custard.
- Fruit mousse or fruit fool or soft/poached pears (mashed).
- Thick smooth chocolate sauce or chocolate spread, with smooth plain full fat yoghurt.
- Milk pudding, e.g. custard/chocolate pudding/crème caramel/blancmange/Angel Delight.

***Avoid: Muesli, granola, cereals with dried fruit, nuts & seeds. Avoid crumbly, dry bases or toppings.***

## SAMPLE MENU PLAN

### **Breakfast**

Porridge, well-soaked Weetabix, Ready-Brek with mashed fruit/compote and glass of milk or hot chocolate.

Scrambled or poached eggs (chopped-up), baked beans (mashed and sieved or processed).

*Fortify by adding cream / sugar / honey / smooth peanut butter or full-fat yoghurt and adding skimmed milk powder/cream to drinks.*

### **Mid-morning snack**

Thick and creamy yoghurt or chocolate mousse.

*Fortify by adding double cream and puréed fruit compote.*

### **Lunch**

Soft and tender fish cooked in parsley or cream sauce served with swede and potato mash, creamed corn OR Mexican chilli with non-sticky rice or couscous.

Blancmange or crème caramel.

*Fortify by adding butter and mix into mash, adding full-fat cream cheese.*

### **Mid-afternoon snack**

Tinned / mashed stewed fruit and thick yoghurt OR smashed avocado and cream cheese.

Milkshake / smoothie or juice drink.

*Fortify by adding seedless jam or honey to yoghurt or add whipped cream to sweet dessert. Add dried skimmed milk powder to milky drinks.*

### **Evening meal**

slow cooked casserole and non-sticky rice, or pasta or butternut and sweet potato mash.

*Fortify by adding coconut cream/double crème, crème fraîche to curries and vegetable mash, stews or gravies to enrich these.*

### **Before bed**

Have nourishing milky drinks: Malted drink made with whole milk (blue top). Use double cream or skimmed milk powder to fortify.

## Making the most of what you eat:

If you need to gain weight, have a poor or small appetite, you may need to change your diet to make sure that you are getting all the energy and protein your body needs. Enriching or fortifying your meals involves adding extra calories and protein such as cheese, cream, butter etc. See 'helpful tips' below.

***Please choose foods suited to your taste and texture as recommended by your speech and language therapist.***



## How to have a fortified diet (high calorie; high protein)

- ***Eat 'little and often'***: Try small, nourishing meals, snacks and drinks every 2-3 hours throughout the day.
- ***Fortify your milk***: add 2-4 heaped tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder and blend into 1 pint whole milk. Chill in the fridge and then use on cereals, in porridge, to make up sauces, soups, desserts, jellies, milky drinks etc.
- ***Add dried skimmed milk powder*** to soups, cups of tea/coffee or hot chocolate, milk puddings, custards, mashed potatoes: try adding 2-3 teaspoons per portion of food.
- ***Add margarine, cheese, mayonnaise or oils*** into savoury options such as mashed swede/potato or sweet potato, pasta dished or sandwiches.
- ***Choose full fat and full sugar products*** rather than 'diet' 'reduced/low fat' 'low sugar' or 'healthy eating' varieties as these provide more calories.
- ***Add cream or evaporated milk*** to soups or puddings e.g. stewed / canned fruits, custard, rice puddings etc. Serve jam, honey, sugar or syrup to milky puddings, cereals, drinks and desserts.

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## How to add 100 calories to any meal, snack or drink

Each of the below suggestions add approximately 100 calories to a meal or snack. Aim to choose at least 4-5 of the suggestions below to achieve an additional 400-500 calories daily.

***(If you need to gain weight or have trouble eating a regular meal pattern speak to your dietitian for more specific and tailored advice.)***

### Sweet options:

- 1 heaped tbsp. of sugar
- 1 small pot full fat yoghurt
- 1½ tbsp double cream
- \*2 tbsp chocolate sauce
- 2 tbsp golden syrup
- 2 tbsp lemon curd
- 2 tbsp condensed milk
- 2 tbsp honey
- 2 scoops of ice cream

### Savoury options:

- A small handful of finely grated cheese
- 1 tbsp of mayonnaise
- \*1 tbsp of smooth peanut butter
- 1 tbsp olive or vegetable oil
- 2 cubes of butter
- \*2 tbsp pesto
- 2 tbsp salad cream
- \*2 tbsp hummus/ tahini (sesame seed paste)
- 2 heaped tbsp dried skimmed milk powder

*\*Not suitable if you have a peanut/seed/pine nut allergy. Always read labels to ensure products are safe to consume. Some chocolate sauces contain nuts, e.g. Nutella.*

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***In accordance with the International food and fluid descriptors labelled IDDSI May 2018 ([www.IDDSI.org](http://www.IDDSI.org))***

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Department: Adult Speech & Language Therapy, 0118 938 2136  
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