

Mechanical Soft Diet

What is a mechanical soft diet?

This diet is designed for people who have trouble chewing and swallowing. Chopped, ground and pureed foods are included in this diet, as well as foods that readily break apart without a knife.

Why is this diet safer for me?

The foods in this diet are easy to eat and do not need a lot of chewing to swallow safely. This diet is helpful if you are missing teeth or have just had surgery and are not able to chew hard foods. This diet does include soft breads and rice, so it is important that you are able to move food in your mouth and are able to swallow safely.

Food Groups	Safe Foods	Avoid
Milk Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smooth or fruited yogurt Cottage cheese Soft sliced cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard cheese cubes and slices Yogurt with nuts or granola
Meat and Protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground cooked meat and poultry Baked, poached or broiled fish Casseroles with ground or 1/4 inch diced meat Eggs Cottage cheese Sandwiches with soft bread Shaved deli turkey or ham Tuna salad or egg salad without celery or raw vegetables Tofu Well cooked, moistened and mashed dried beans, peas and legumes Diced meatloaf and meatballs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick cold cuts Sausage, wieners, hamburgers Large chunks of cheese Casseroles with large chunks of meat Entire pieces of meat Fried fish Peanut butter Chili with beans Crisp fried eggs
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft cooked vegetables that can easily be mashed with a fork Legumes, potatoes without skins, and squash Minced 1/8 or Diced 1/4 inch vegetables (you may find that some do not mince well) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corn Asparagus Raw vegetables Stir fried or lightly cooked vegetables that are still crunchy Fried vegetables Crispy French fries, crispy hash browns or fried potato skins

Food Groups	Safe Foods	Avoid
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applesauce or other pureed fruit ▪ Drained canned fruits (unless you are allowed thin liquids) ▪ Soft, fresh fruits such as peaches, nectarines without skin, melon, and bananas ▪ Cooked fruit, mashed or diced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canned fruit with juice or syrup unless allowed to drink thin liquids ▪ Fruit with skins and seeds ▪ Pineapple ▪ Dried fruits
Breads, Cereals, and Starches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cream of Wheat[®], Cream of Rice[®], oatmeal, Malt-o-Meal[®], or Co-Co Wheats[®] ▪ Soft pancakes, soft French toast moistened with syrup or sauce ▪ Soft pasta, spätzle or dumplings with sauce, butter or gravy ▪ Moist white rice ▪ Soft breads, rolls, or muffins ▪ Plain cold cereal softened with milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brown or wild rice ▪ Cold coarse cereals with whole grains, dry fruit or nuts ▪ Dry coarse breads with pieces of grain, nuts or seeds ▪ Coarse hard crackers such as Rye Crisp or Melba toast ▪ Hard taco shells ▪ Popcorn, chips ▪ Chow mein noodles
Soup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any cream soups or broth soups without large chunks of food ▪ Plain broth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soups with stringy meats, hard vegetables or other firm pieces of food
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Custards or pudding ▪ Rice or bread pudding without dried fruit ▪ Gelatin ▪ Sherbet/sorbet, Ice cream and popsicles if thin liquids are allowed ▪ Cakes and pies without nuts ▪ Soft cookies without dried fruit or nuts ▪ Chocolate candy without nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desserts with nuts, seeds, coconut or dried fruit ▪ Candy with nuts ▪ Hard or chewy candy or cookies (taffy, caramel, licorice) ▪ Granola bars
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All drinks 	None, unless you have been told to thicken your liquids then see Health Facts For You # 468.

Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Butter, margarine, oils, vegetable shortening, ▪ Salad dressings, mayonnaise ▪ Vinegar ▪ Gravies ▪ Salt, pepper, spices ▪ Catsup, mustard, barbecue sauce ▪ Jelly or preserves (without tough fruit skins) ▪ Sugar, honey, molasses, or syrup, ▪ Horseradish ▪ Chili sauce ▪ Sauces: tomato, alfredo, cheese ▪ Cream cheese and spreads with soft fruits or vegetables ▪ Sour cream and dips with soft fruits and vegetables ▪ Whipped topping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Olives ▪ Jam or jelly with seeds ▪ Salsa with large pieces of vegetable
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How to Prepare Diced Meat and Vegetables

All food must be in pieces that are no larger than ¼ inch.

1. Cut meat or veggies into strips that are ¼ inch or less.
2. Turn and cut every ¼ inch or less. You will want to be sure that all cubes are smaller than ¼ inch.



Cooking and Preparation Tips

- Use tools such as a blender, food processor, food chopper, grinder, or potato masher to prepare foods for this diet.
- Use gravies, sauces, vegetable or fruit juice, milk, half-and-half or water from cooking to moisten foods when blending, chopping, grinding, or mashing them.
- Serve foods with gravies or sauces to moisten them and to add flavor.
- Serve soft, moist casseroles and fish, meat, or egg salads without large chunks of meat or vegetables.
- Serve soups with small pieces of easy to chew and easy to swallow meats and vegetables.
- Cover bread products such as pancakes or bread slices with sauce, gravy, or syrup, then mix the two items until the bread product begins to dissolve into a slurry.

- Add dry milk powder to foods to increase the calories and protein in this diet.
- Prepare quantities of favorite food items and freeze them in portion sizes for use later.
- Reheat foods carefully so that a tough outer crust does not form on them.
- Avoid sticky foods such as peanut butter, and chewy candies such as caramel, toffee, and licorice.
- Vegetables should be cooked tender enough to be easily mashed with a fork.

How can I increase my calories without a lot of chewing?

Add nutritional supplements such as Ensure[®], BOOST[®], or Carnation Breakfast Essentials[®] to your diet. Most people on this diet are happy to find out that desserts are a fun way to increase calories. In the morning, you can fix what you might want to call “Super Duper Cereal.” It can be made based on what tastes you like.

Super Duper Cereal

1 package of plain instant oatmeal

4 ounces of high protein nutrition supplement such as Boost High Protein[®], Ensure High Protein[®], or similar product. You pick the flavor.

Nutmeg or cinnamon

Empty instant oats into a microwave bowl. Add supplement. Microwave uncovered for 1 ½ -2 minutes or until thickened. Use potholders to remove. Sprinkle with nutmeg or cinnamon. Serve with milk or cream as desired. Each serving will provide 212 calories and 20.5 grams of protein.

Butterscotch Oatmeal

1 egg, beaten

1 ¾ cups milk

¼ cup packed dark brown sugar

1 cup quick cooking oats or blended rolled oats

2 tablespoons butter

In a sauce pan over medium heat, whisk together the egg, milk, and brown sugar. Mix in the oats. When the oatmeal begins to boil, cook and stir until thick. Remove from the heat. Stir in the butter until melted. Makes two servings. Each serving will provide 497 calories and 16.4 grams of protein.

Teach Back

What is the most important thing you learned from this handout?

What changes will you make in your diet/lifestyle, based on what you learned today?

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below. You can also visit our website at www.uwhealth.org/nutrition.

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at: **(608) 890-5500**.

Nutrition clinics for UW Medical Foundation (UWMF) can be reached at: **(608) 287-2770**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2017 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Clinical Nutrition Services Department and the Department of Nursing. HF#363