

Healthy Eating Guidelines For People with Chewing Difficulties

This resource will help you choose foods that are soft, moist and easy to chew. These eating guidelines may be helpful if you have undergone head, neck or mouth surgery, or have had recent dental work.



Steps you can take

- | Choose soft moist foods. Chop, finely mince, grind, mash or puree foods to a texture you can easily chew.
- | Soften bread products or crackers in soup, milk or tea; or spread with non-hydrogenated margarine, syrup or honey.
- | Use milk, cream, or broth to mash vegetables like potatoes, yams, squash or carrots.
- | Blend banana, melon, or frozen fruit into milkshakes or smoothies.
- | Use gravy, broth or sauce to moisten meat, poultry or fish.
- | Use cheese sauce to moisten vegetables, noodles or rice.
- | Top foods with butter, margarine, oils, salad dressings or sour cream to moisten foods and enhance flavours.
- | For overall health, eat balanced meals each day. Choose foods from all 4 of the food groups in "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide" www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guides.html. Aim to include at least 3 of the 4 food groups at each meal.

The table below will help you choose foods from each food group that are soft and easy to chew.

<i>Food Group</i>	<i>Choose</i>	<i>Avoid</i>
Vegetables and Fruit	Canned or well cooked	Fresh grapefruit

<p>7-10 servings per day</p> <p>1 serving =</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 125 mL (½ cup) cooked vegetables 125 mL (½ cup) cooked or canned fruit 125 mL (½ cup) juice 	<p>vegetables or fruit</p> <p>Mashed or pureed fruit or vegetable, such as applesauce, mashed potatoes</p> <p>Soft, well ripe fruit or vegetable, such as banana, peach, avocado</p> <p>Fruit or vegetable juice</p>	<p>and oranges</p> <p>Cherries</p> <p>Grapes</p> <p>Pineapple</p> <p>Pan-fried potatoes, potato skins, French fries</p> <p>Any fried or crispy vegetables</p> <p>Dried fruit or vegetables unless cooked until soft</p>
<p>Grain Products</p> <p>6-8 servings per day</p> <p>1 serving =</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 slice bread, 1 small pancake or waffle, ½ muffin (35 g) 175 mL (¾ cup) cooked cereal or 30 g cold cereal 125 mL (½ cup) cooked pasta, rice, quinoa 30 g crackers 	<p>Soft breads, pancakes, muffins and baked goods</p> <p>Oatmeal or cream of wheat</p> <p>Cold cereal that becomes soft with milk</p> <p>Soft cooked noodles, pasta, rice, or quinoa</p> <p>Crackers softened in soup or milk</p>	<p>Breads or buns with tough crusts</p> <p>Baked goods and cereals made with dried fruits, nuts or seeds</p> <p>Cereals that stay crunchy in milk</p> <p>Crisp crackers or biscuits</p>

<i>Food Group</i>	<i>Choose</i>	<i>Avoid</i>
<p>Milk and Alternatives</p> <p>2-3 servings per day</p> <p>1 serving =</p>	<p>Milk, chocolate milk or milkshakes</p> <p>Cottage cheese, ricotta</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250 mL (1 cup) milk or fortified soy beverage 175 mL (¾ cup) yogurt 250 mL (1 cup) cottage cheese 50 g (1½ oz) natural hard cheese 2 processed cheese slices 	<p>cheese or cheese sauce</p> <p>Soft, grated or melted cheese</p> <p>Plain or flavoured yogurt, custards, puddings or ice cream</p>	
<p>Meat and Meat Alternatives</p> <p>2-3 servings per day</p> <p>1 serving =</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 g (2 ½ oz) cooked meat, poultry or fish 175 mL (¾ cup) tofu 2 eggs 175 mL (¾ cup) cooked beans, peas and lentils 30 mL (2 Tbsp) peanut or nut butter 	<p>Stewed or braised tender, cooked beef, pork, lamb, chicken or turkey (ground, minced or moist, thinly sliced meats)</p> <p>Fish without bones</p> <p>Casseroles made of ground meat, beans or lentils</p> <p>Smooth peanut butter</p> <p>Tofu</p> <p>Eggs</p>	<p>Hot dogs, sausage, bacon slices</p> <p>Dry or tough cuts of meat</p> <p>Poultry with skin</p> <p>Crunchy peanut butter</p> <p>Whole nuts and seeds</p>

<i>Other Foods</i>	<i>Choose</i>	<i>Avoid</i>
Soups	<p>Clear broth soups</p> <p>Blended soups</p> <p>Creamed soups and chowders</p>	Soups with big pieces of meat or crunchy vegetables
Sweets	Plain jelly	Granola bars

	Jelly with soft fruits Honey Sugar Sugar substitutes Syrup	Chewy candy Crunchy cookies Caramel
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Meal Ideas

- | Macaroni and cheese
- | Shepherd's Pie (made with ground beef and well cooked vegetables)
- | Meatloaf
- | Perogies
- | Lasagna/cannelloni/pasta dishes
- | Omelettes
- | Chili

Other Tips

- | Remove skins and seeds from fruits and vegetables before cooking.
- | Don't eat foods or drinks made with raw eggs, as these can cause food poisoning.
- | If your appetite is small, eat more often - 5 or 6 times a day.
- | If you are losing weight, talk to a registered dietitian.



Additional Resources

HealthLinkBC www.HealthLinkBC.ca Medically approved non-emergency health information and advice.

These resources are provided as sources of additional information believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication and should not be considered an endorsement of any information, service, product or company.



Notes

Distributed by:

Dietitian Services at HealthLinkBC (formerly Dial-A-Dietitian), providing free nutrition information and resources for BC residents and health professionals. Go to www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating or call 8-1-1 (anywhere in BC). Interpreters are available in over 130 languages.