

Easier to Chew Diet (Level 7)

Speech and Language Therapy Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for patients that have been seen by a speech and language therapist and have been advised to have an “easier to chew” diet to help with swallowing. This leaflet is also suitable for people who may not have any problems with swallowing, but for various reasons (e.g. preference, lack of/fewer teeth or dentures or following jaw surgery) may opt for softer, easier to chew food. This leaflet gives information describing the texture of easier to chew foods, foods to avoid and advice on how to swallow safely.

What is an “easier to chew” diet?

You may have been assessed by a speech and language therapist who has recommended you have an “easier to chew” diet to reduce the risk of aspiration (food going the wrong way) or choking on food.

If you have not been seen by a speech and language therapist, having foods that are “easier to chew” may be right for you if you usually choose to eat soft food, or if you have weaker chewing muscles for hard/firm textures but can chew soft and tender food without tiring easily.

Easier to chew foods:

- Are normal foods that naturally have a soft/tender texture.
- You should be able to chew pieces of soft and tender food without tiring easily or taking a long time to chew them.
- Your tongue should be able to move food for chewing and apply pressure until the food is soft and moist enough to be easily swallowed.
- You should be able to break these foods apart into smaller pieces with the side of a fork or spoon.

Foods NOT suitable:

- Hard, tough or chewy foods, for example boiled/chewy sweets, tough meat, nuts or raw, crunchy vegetables.
- Stringy, fibrous foods, for example pineapple, runner beans, celery or lettuce.
- Crumbly or crunchy foods, for example dry biscuits, crisps or flaky pastry.
- Husks, vegetable/fruit skins or pips/seeds, for example sweetcorn, peas or grapes.
- Mixed consistency foods, for example cereals which do not blend with milk or soup with lumps/bits e.g. minestrone.

Safe swallowing guidelines

- Take small amounts at a time, ensuring you chew food well.
- Ensure your posture is good and sit as upright as possible.
- Ensure you remain upright for 30 minutes after eating.
- Do not rush, and ensure you concentrate on swallowing.
- Try not to talk while eating and drinking.

Signs of swallowing difficulties

When eating and drinking, it is important to be aware of the following signs of swallowing difficulties:

- Coughing, choking or coughing fits when swallowing food or drink (this may be during or after meals).

- A 'gurgly' voice after eating or drinking.
- Food remaining in your mouth after a meal.
- Shortness of breath during or after eating.
- Food getting stuck in your throat.
- Feeling chesty or having regular chest infections.
- Remember, if you are sleepy or unwell, your swallow may be worse than usual.
- If you are assisting someone with eating and drinking and notice unsafe behaviours, for example putting too much food into the mouth, eating too quickly or swallowing large mouthfuls of food.

If you notice any of the above, contact your GP or your speech and language therapy team for advice:

Dudley community speech and language therapy: 01384 321600

Dudley acute speech and language therapy: 01384 456111
ext. 4565

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

The speech and language therapy team on 01384 456111 ext. 4565

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/speech-and-language-therapy/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔