

## **Puree Diet**

**Rationale:** *You may need to follow a pureed diet if you have trouble chewing or swallowing your food. To puree a food means to chop or grind it into a thick paste.*

### **Be sure you get enough**

Many people who have trouble chewing or swallowing are not able to eat a lot at one time. You may need to eat more often to avoid losing weight. Eating 6 small meals or 3 small meals and 3 snacks each day helps you get enough calories. You may want to try having high-calorie or protein drinks such as milkshakes between your meals. This will help you get plenty of calories.

### **Preparing foods**

Foods need to be pureed, blended, or strained to make them into a smooth form. Avoid all foods with nuts or seeds, stringy food such as celery or onions, and foods with a tough skin such as dried beans, peas, or corn. These foods do not puree well.

### **How to puree food**

1. Chop solid food (such as chicken or beef) into small pieces.
2. Place the food in a blender or food processor.
3. Add a liquid such as milk, juice, or broth to the blender or processor.
4. Puree the mixture.

You will have to experiment with this to come up with the right proportions of liquid and solid food.

### **Thickening agents**

Some people have difficulty swallowing thin liquids and need to have items such as juice, milk, or soup thickened. Commercial thickeners can be used to thicken liquids. Products such as potato flakes and baby cereal can also be used as thickeners. Commercial thickeners are used in different amounts depending on the thickness of the food you mix with it.

Thickeners can be used with hot or cold items. Potato flakes and baby cereal work best if mixed with a hot liquid.

The term "slurry" refers to a thickener dissolved in liquid. Slurry helps dry, crumbly foods (bread, cakes, and cookies) become softer and more liquid, which makes them easier to swallow. It can also help make pureed food thicker or "stickier" to help make swallowing easier. Gelatin mix, which is normally used to make gelatin dessert (Jell-O), can be used as slurry. Pureed fruit and vegetable salads, cakes, cookies, sandwiches, and items that are served chilled can be softened, thickened, or made stickier with gelatin.

### ***Gelatin slurry***

To soften bread, cake, or cookies and make them more liquid and easier to swallow, dissolve 1 tablespoon of gelatin in 2 cups of a liquid. **Do not** chill it or let it solidify (as you would Jell-O). Instead, pour the gelatin mixture over the food item you want to soften. Let it sit for at least 15 minutes to thoroughly soften.

### ***Commercial thickener slurry***

To use a commercial thickener to thicken meat, chicken, or fish purees, use the following recipe as a guide:

**Meat:** dissolve 2 tablespoons of thickener in 4 ounces of broth. Mix 2 tablespoons of this mixture into 1/4 cup (2 ounces) of pureed meat.

**Chicken:** dissolve 3 tablespoons of thickener in 4 ounces of broth. Mix 2 tablespoons of this mixture into 1/4 cup (2 ounces) of pureed chicken.

**Fish:** dissolve 4 tablespoons of thickener in 4 ounces of broth or juice. Mix 2 tablespoons of this mixture into 1/4 cup (2 ounces) of pureed fish.

To soften bread, cake, crackers, or cookies, dissolve 1 tablespoon of thickener in 1/2 cup (4 ounces) of liquid. If using bread, cut off the crust. Pierce food with a fork. Pour the thickener mixture over the food and let it sit for at least 15 minutes to thoroughly soften.

#### **Pureed diet tips**

##### **Milk: Serving size: 2 8-ounce servings per day**

###### **Foods Recommended**

- milk and milkshakes
- cream
- yogurt without nuts or seeds
- eggnog (no raw eggs)

###### **Tips**

- Milk and yogurt are good sources of protein and can be used to thin casseroles.

##### **Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Cheese: Serving size: 6 ounces per day**

###### **Foods Recommended**

- pureed meat, fish, or poultry
- scrambled eggs or egg substitute
- cottage cheese
- peanut butter
- pureed casseroles
- macaroni and cheese

###### **Tips**

- Try thinning pureed meats or casseroles with broth or gravy.

##### **Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta: Serving size: 6-11 servings per day**

###### **Foods Recommended**

- cooked cereal without added fruits/nuts
- pureed rice, noodles, pancakes, French toast, or muffins
- mashed potatoes
- broth, strained cream soup

###### **Tips**

- Add a small amount of gravy or sauce when pureeing noodles or rice.

##### **Vegetables: Serving size: 2-3 servings per day**

###### **Foods Recommended**

- pureed vegetables
- vegetable juices

###### **Tips**

- Add butter or margarine to boost calories.

**Fruits Serving size: 2-4 servings per day**

**Foods Recommended**

- applesauce
- pureed fruit
- fruit juices

**Tips**

- Mix pureed fruit with yogurt or milkshakes.

**Sweets and Desserts: Use in moderation.**

**Foods Recommended**

- pudding, custard, sherbet, ice cream, gelatin, fruit ice, and pudding pops
- pureed cakes and pies
- jelly, sugar, honey, and syrup
- whipped topping

**Tips**

- Honey, jelly, or syrup can be blended into other foods for extra flavor and calories.

**Fats, Beverages, and Condiments**

**Foods Recommended**

- margarine, butter, and gravy
- salt, pepper, and ground spices
- salad dressings and mayonnaise
- coffee, tea, or any other beverages

**Tips**

- Add extra margarine or butter to foods for added calories.