

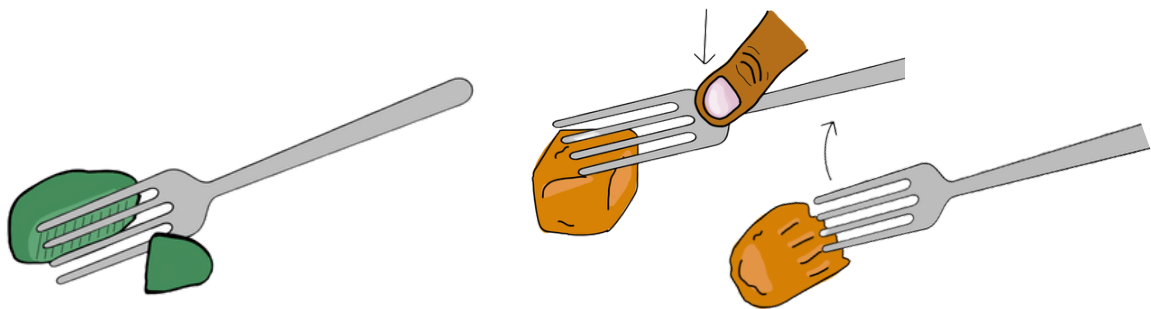
Level 7: Easy To Chew Diet

Why is Easy to Chew Diet recommended?

- Difficulties with chewing and swallowing hard or chewy foods
- Missing or no teeth
- Allows chewing without getting overly tired

What is an Easy to Chew Diet?

- Food is soft and tender
- There are no size restrictions
- Food must be easily broken with a fork
- Food must be easily squashed with a fork (thumbnail turns white)



Examples of Easy to Chew Diet from Woodlands Health



Chicken Char Siew



Ikan Pepe



White Radish and Carrots

Examples of Easy to Chew Diets based on cuisine

Cuisine	Examples
Chinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Braised tau kwa• Carrot cake• Fish porridge / fish soup noodles• Hokkien mee / hor fun/ ban mian / (no fried ikan bilis/ leafy green vegetables)• Ee mian (soften with gravy/soup)
Indian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thosai• Putu Mayam• Paneer• Dhal• Idly• Dhokla
Malay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mee rebus / mee siam / mee soto without the protein and vegetables (e.g. fried tofu, chicken)• Laksa (remove prawns and green vegetables)
Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrambled or steamed egg, omelette, sunny side-up without fried edges, hard-boiled egg• Pancakes• Pasta with sauce
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tau huey• Red bean / Green bean soup• Nut pastes (e.g. sesame paste, almond paste, lotus paster pau)• Poached pear / apples / peaches

Tips to prepare the appropriate texture

Meat

- Use a pressure / slow cooker to stew.
- Cook for a longer period until tender.
- Make meat tender by pounding it before cooking or use natural tenderisers (e.g. vinegar, pineapple, papaya, ginger, baking soda, lemon juice, yoghurt).
- If texture cannot be soft and tender, ensure dish is moist and chopped to minced texture.

Fish

- Steam until it soft enough to break into small pieces with a fork, spoon, or chopsticks.

Casserole/Stew/Curry

- Can contain meat, fish, vegetables if final cooked pieces are soft and tender.
- Serve in thick sauce and drain excess liquid (if required).
- Ensure there are no hard lumps.

Fruit

- Remove skin, seeds and fibrous parts of fruits (e.g., white part of an orange).
- Avoid fruits with seeds that are difficult to remove e.g. kiwi.

Vegetables

- Cook vegetables until tender by cooking for a longer time, in stews or soups.
- Check softness with fork pressure test.

Cereal

- Soften cereal with warm liquids.
- Drain excess milk or liquid, or thicken liquid to level suggested by Speech Therapist.

Bread/Sandwich/Toast/Biscuits

- Soak toast and biscuits until soft and drain excess fluids.
- Ensure they can be cut into smaller pieces with the side of a fork.

Rice/Pasta/Couscous

- Cook with more water or for a longer duration.
- Ensure that it is not too sticky or glutinous.

Foods to avoid

- Hard foods (e.g., nuts, muesli, crackers, biscuits, hard cheeses like cheddar)
- Tough meats (e.g., duck meat)
- Chewy foods (e.g., sea clams, French baguette)
- Fibrous parts of fruit/vegetables (e.g., mango fiber, skin of fruits, vegetables stalks, leafy vegetables)
- Husks and bones



Feeding Practices

Safe feeding strategies

- Ensure that patient is upright and alert, do not feed lying down.
- Drain or thicken soup if required.
- Do not serve liquids and solids in the same mouthful.
- Feed next spoon only after the previous spoonful has been swallowed.
- Feed at a slow rate.
- Give rest if any shortness of breath is observed.
- Check for food remaining in the mouth and remove them after meals.
- Provide fluids to clear food residue if recommended by Speech Therapist

Signs to look out for when feeding

- Coughing when eating/drinking
- Throat clearing when eating/drinking
- Gurgly voice
- Increase in breathing rate



What to do when you notice the above

- Stop feeding and allow rest for 10 minutes.
- Try feeding again.
- If signs are still present, cook food softer and cut them up to 1.5cm x1.5cm pieces.
- Call the hospital hotline to make an appointment with the Speech Therapist.
- Note: If persistent cough and phlegm is noted, please consult a doctor.



How to encourage intake

- Prepare meals using food the rest of the household is already eating to save time and money. This also makes the food taste familiar.
- Use different coloured food to make the meal look more appetising.
- Serve food on attractive plates/bowls.
- Serve food on plates that have contrast to improve visibility (e.g., serve porridge in a coloured bowl).
- Make mealtimes more enjoyable by having it with friends or family.



My Healthy Plate



Image taken from www.healthhub.sg

1. Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate with fruit and/or vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ with meat and others, and $\frac{1}{4}$ with rice and other grains/starches.
 2. Include food from all food groups in your meal to ensure you get all the nutrients your body needs.
- Grains and starches provide energy and vitamin B
 - Examples include brown rice, noodles, wholemeal bread
 - Meat is an important source of protein which helps maintain and prevent the loss of muscle mass and function. Protein also prevents pressure sores and promotes wound healing
 - Examples include: Fish, chicken, mutton, beef, pork, eggs, milk, soy products, beans and lentils
 - Vegetables and fruits are rich in fibre, vitamins and minerals

If you or your loved one is losing weight, have any questions on nutrition, or are experiencing difficulties with swallowing, please do not hesitate to contact us at 6363 3000 or enquiry@wh.com.sg.

Contributed by Speech Therapy, Rehabilitation, Allied Health Services

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

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