
NUTRITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR DIETITIAN

Dysphagia Diet (Level 4)

Purpose of Diet

Dysphagia diets are recommended for individuals with temporary or permanent swallowing issues. The goal of the diet is to find the safest and most enjoyable foods for you to eat.

This diet is based on the IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative) framework. Foods and drinks are divided into 8 levels depending on their thickness and texture. Most people will receive a food modification IDDSI level and a drink modification IDDSI level.

Drinks (Level 0-4)

Level 0: Thin

Level 1: Slightly thick

Level 2: Mildly thick

Level 3: Moderately thick

Level 4: Extremely thick

Foods (Level 3-7)

Level 3: Liquidized

Level 4: Pureed

Level 5: Minced and moist

Level 6: Soft and bite-sized

Level 7: Regular / Easy to chew

General guidelines

- A speech therapist or a physician will determine which diet is appropriate for you.
- Some individuals may have two different IDDSI prescriptions – one for food and for liquids. Work with your dietitian to identify which foods and beverages are appropriate for you.
- It can be difficult to meet energy needs on a liquid-based diet. Follow the recommendations of your doctor and nutritionist to ensure your body is getting the nutrition it needs.

IDDSI Level 4 guidelines

Level 4 foods and drinks:

- Are smooth and uniform in texture
- Cannot pour from a cup or be sucked through a straw
- Are thick enough to hold shape
- Can be eaten without biting or chewing

Special Instructions: Use this space to write special instructions or notes from you dietitian.

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IDDSI Level 4: Pureed

Tips for preparing foods to meet Level 4 guidelines:






- Remove tough skin and large seeds before pureeing.
- Cut foods into small chunks and blend small amounts to prevent lumping
- Add thickener if product remains too thin
- Breads, cakes, pancakes can be made into a slurry using milk, apple juice, Sprite or gelatin. The bread product must be completely saturated with liquid.
- Add white sauce, evaporated milk, or other high fat foods such as avocado, olive oil, or butter to cooked foods to increase the calorie content of your meals
- If you are unable to cook or prepare your meals, consider purchasing ready-made pureed meals and pre-thickened liquids

Recommended foods

FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p><i>Beverages</i></p> 	<p>* Liquids that can be thickened or thinned to a Level 4 consistency, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoothies • Milkshakes • Fruit juice • vegetable juice • coffee • Tea • Soda • Nutritional supplements • Ice chips <p>* Follow recommendations from your physician about thickened liquids</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any liquid with lumps, chunks, seeds, pulp, etc. • Any beverage that is too thin
<p><i>Breads and Grains</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well cooked, pureed starch, such as pasta, noodles, bread stuffing, or rice (mixed in a blender to a smooth, consistent texture) • Pureed bread mixes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole pasta • Bread, bagels, dinner rolls or any other bread products • Baked goods • Pizza • Popcorn, chips, crackers • Cooked whole grains (rice, quinoa, barley, grits, etc.)





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<p>Cereals</p> 	<p>Smooth, cooked cereals with pudding-like consistency (farina, cream of wheat, rice cereal)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oatmeal or cooked cereals with lumps, seeds, or chunks • Dry cereals
<p>Fats</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter, margarine, sour cream, mayonnaise, whipped topping, cream cheese • Thickened, smooth sauces such as white sauce, cheese sauce, or hollandaise sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fats with coarse or chunky additives • Oils and salad dressings of restricted thickness
<p>Fruits</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pureed fruits without skin or seeds • Applesauce • Well-mashed bananas • Thickened fruit juices without pulp, seeds or chunks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned) • Dried fruits
<p>Meat and Meat Substitutes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moistened pureed beef, poultry or fish. • Moist, pureed cooked eggs • Well cooked, pureed legumes or beans. • Soft tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole or ground meats, fish or poultry • Bacon, hot dogs, and sausage • Cheese, cottage cheese • Fried, scrambled, or hard cooked eggs • Peanut butter (unless blended and thinned) • Nuts and seeds
<p>Milk and Milk Products</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thickened milk and buttermilk (If thickened liquids are recommended) • Thickened smooth yogurt (If thickened liquids are recommended) • Cheese Whiz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yogurt with seeds, nuts or lumps • All types of cheeses, including cottage cheese

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<p>Potatoes and Substitutes</p> 	<p>Mashed potatoes blended with gravy or cheese, butter, margarine, and/or sour cream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French fries, tater tots, hash browns • All other forms of potatoes
<p>Soups</p> 	<p>Thickened, smooth cream-based or broth-based soups if texture meets Level 4 thickness requirements</p>	<p>Soups with chunks of meat or vegetables</p>
<p>Sweets and Desserts</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth puddings, custards, yogurt, and pureed desserts • Frozen yogurt* • Ice cream* • Malts* • Iced desserts* • Popsicles* • Eggnog (thickened) • Jell-O (is a thin liquid) <p>* If thickened liquids are prescribed, desserts that melt to a thin liquid should be thickened to appropriate consistency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked goods, such as cookies, cakes, pies, and pastries • Coarse or textured puddings • Yogurt with fruit • Products that turn to liquid at room or body temperature and are too thick or thin
<p>Vegetables</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pureed vegetables without chunks, lumps, pulp, or seeds • Tomato paste or sauce without seeds or chunks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole vegetables (raw or cooked) • Tomato sauce with seeds

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