
NUTRITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR DIETITIAN

Dysphagia Diet (Level 6)

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 6 guidelines

Level 6 foods:

- Are soft, moist and tender
- Thin liquids will not drip or leak from food
- Are bite-sized: 1/2-inch x 1/2-inch (15 mm x 15 mm) for adults and 1/4-inch x 1/4-inch (8 mm x 8 mm) for kids
- Can be easily mashed with a fork or spoon
- Need chewing before swallowing

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

This handout is intended for use during an appointment with a registered dietitian only and is not meant for use by other clinicians.





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IDDSI Level 6: Soft and bite-sized

Tips for preparing foods to meet Level 6 guidelines:






- This diet consists of foods that are nearly regular texture except for foods that are hard, tough, chewy, sticky, crunchy, or fibrous or stringy. Avoid pips/seeds, bones, and gristle.
- Foods should be cooked soft enough to mash with a fork.

Recommended foods

FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p>Beverages</p> 	<p>All liquids unless thickening is recommended by your speech therapist or physician</p>	<p>Any beverage of restricted thickness</p>
<p>Breads and Grains</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bite-sized, moistened bread & bread products • Rice • Pasta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry bread or toast • Crackers, croutons, potato chips • Popcorn
<p>Cereals</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked cereals such as farina and cream of wheat, oatmeal and rice cereal • Dry cereal with milk (must be moistened - drain excess liquid before serving) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked cereals with seeds, nuts, or chunks • Coarse or dry cereals like Shredded Wheat, All Bran, or Frosted Mini Wheats
<p>Fats</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter, margarine, sour cream, mayonnaise, whipped topping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fats with coarse or chunky additives • Oils and salad dressings of restricted thickness • Crispy bacon




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FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p>Fruits</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All canned or cooked fruits • Soft berries with small seeds (strawberries, raspberries) • Soft, peeled fresh fruits cut in bite-sized pieces, such as peaches, bananas, nectarines and kiwi • Fruit juices (may need to be thickened) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult-to-chew fruits, such as apples or grapes • Stringy, high-pulp fruits such as oranges or pineapple • Dried fruits
<p>Meat and Meat Substitutes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground or tender meats and poultry • Fish without bones • Casseroles with tender meat and vegetables • Eggs cooked in any style • Beans, hummus, or other bean dip or spread • Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry or tough meats • Fish with bones • Peanut butter • Nuts and seeds • Sausage, bacon
<p>Milk and Milk Products</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk and buttermilk (may need to be thickened) • Yogurt (may need to be thickened) • Cottage cheese • Cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yogurt with nuts or coconuts • Liquid consistencies not allowed
<p>Miscellaneous</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All seasonings and sweeteners • Non-chewy candies without seeds or nuts • Jams, jellies, honey, syrup and preserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sauces with seeds or nuts • Sticky foods • Chewy candies such as caramels and taffy • Hard candy • Chewing gum
<p>Potatoes and Substitutes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiled, baked or mashed potatoes • Tender, fried potatoes cut in bit sized pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crispy hash browns • Potato skins • Sticky mashed potatoes

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FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p>Soups</p> 	<p>Soup with tender or soft meats or vegetables that meet Level 6 guidelines (some soups may need to be thickened)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soups with tough meats or large chunks • Soups such as corn or clam chowder (need to be strained) • Soups of restricted liquid consistency
<p>Sweets and Desserts</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moist, tender cakes and cookies • Easy-to-chew desserts such as pudding, custard, or pie • Ice cream, frozen yogurt, sherbet, eggnog, milkshakes, malts* <p>*Frozen desserts need to be checked for thickness (and thickened if needed) at room temperature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry, coarse cakes and cookies • Desserts with nuts, seeds, coconut, pineapple, or dried 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"> • Soft, well-cooked vegetables in bite-sized pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All raw vegetables • Stir fry vegetables (may be too firm) • Tomato sauce with seeds

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