
NUTRITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR DIETITIAN

Dysphagia Diet (Level 7)

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 7 guidelines

Level 7 foods:

- Are everyday foods that are soft and tender in texture
 - Avoid foods that are hard, tough, chewy, sticky, crunchy, fibrous, or stringy.
 - Avoid pips, seeds, husks bones, and gristle
- Have no restrictions on bite or particle size
- Can be easily bit or chewed (without tiring) before swallowing
- Can be of mixed consistency (both thin and thick foods and liquids together), such as cereal or soup

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 7: Regular / Easy to chew

Tips for preparing foods to meet Level 7 guidelines:






- Cook foods to be soft enough to break apart and cut with the side of a fork.
- Choose and prepare foods that are easy to bite and chew without tiring.
- Avoid foods that are not allowed on this diet. These foods will increase your chance of having swallowing problems and of food going into your windpipe or lungs (also called aspiration [as-peer-AYshun]).

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"> • Bread • Muffins • Biscuits • Waffles • Pancakes • Rice • Bread pudding • Casseroles • Pasta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry bread or toast, bread with a hard crust (Italian or French bread, or baguettes) • Crackers, croutons, potato chips • Dry stuffing or bread dressing • 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 • Cream cheese • Whipped topping • Salad dressing without seeds and oils (depending on liquid thickness) • Sauces such as gravy, 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 • 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 bit sized pieces, such as peaches, bananas, nectarines and kiwi cantaloupe, honeydew and seedless watermelon • Fruit juices (may need to be thickened to appropriate thickness if thin liquids are restricted) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult-to-chew fruits, such as apples or pears • Stringy, high-pulp fruits such as papaya, pineapple, white of oranges, or mango • Fresh fruits with difficult-to-chew peels, such as grapes • Dried fruits • Fruit leather, fruit roll-ups, and fruit snacks
<p>Meat and Meat Substitutes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground or tender meats and poultry • Sausage, bacon, bratwurst • 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 • Chunky peanut butter • Nuts and seeds
<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, nuts, or coconuts • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crispy hash browns • Potato skins

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FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p>Soups</p> 	<p>Soup with tender or soft meats or vegetables (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 (if restricted)
<p>Vegetables</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft, well-cooked vegetables • Tomato paste or sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All raw vegetables, including salad • Stir fry vegetables

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