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# ***About your Level 4 PUREED diet***

***Information for  
patients and carers***



**Speech & Language Therapy and  
Dietetic Services**





### ***What is this leaflet for?***

Difficulties with eating, drinking and swallowing are called **dysphagia** (pronounced “diss-fay-gee-ah”).

A Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) has assessed your eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. Your SLT has recommended that you follow an IDDSI\* Level 4 diet with foods that are pureed.

It's very important to follow the diet texture your SLT recommends. This will help to reduce the risks associated with difficulties with swallowing. These risks include:

- aspiration (food or drink going down “the wrong way”).
- choking.
- developing chest infections.

\* The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016 @<https://iddsi.org/framework/>



We've described in this leaflet how you can change the texture of everyday meals and foods for a Level 4 diet. The tables divide food into groups to help you plan a balanced diet.

Please note that this is **general guidance only**. You might not be able to have some of the foods mentioned because they're not safe for you. Please check the individual guidance your SLT gave you.

If you're taking thickened fluids, you must thicken all liquids (such as soups, smoothies, sauces) to the recommended consistency.



### ***What is a Level 4 pureed diet?***

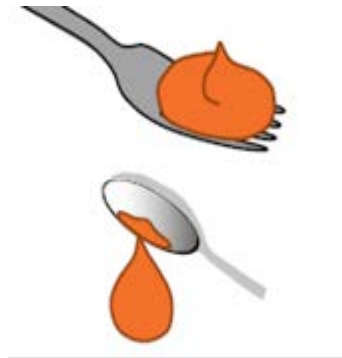
The main features of a Level 4 diet:

- Has no lumps.
- Doesn't require chewing.
- Usually eaten with a spoon (a fork is possible).
- Can't be drunk from a cup.
- Can't be poured.
- Can be piped, layered or moulded.
- Falls off a spoon in a single spoonful when tilted and continues to hold its shape on a plate.
- Isn't sticky.
- Liquid must not separate from solid.

### ***How do I check if my food is the right consistency?***

- When pressed with a fork, the prongs can make a clear pattern on the surface and/or the food retains indentation from the fork.

- Food sits on a fork.  
A small amount may flow through the prongs and form a tail, but it doesn't dollop, flow or drip continuously through the fork prongs.



- Holds its shape on a spoon.
- The full spoonful should slide off the spoon when it's tilted sideways, with very little food left on the spoon.
- May spread slightly on a flat plate, but should hold its shape.

Diagram source: The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016 @<https://iddsi.org/framework/>

### ***How do I prepare food?***

- Make sure all foods are well cooked and soft enough to puree.
- Use a blender to puree food to get the right consistency. All foods should be smooth with no lumps, bits, skins or shells.
- Pass food through a sieve to ensure any lumps/bits are removed (for example for porridge or fruit puree).
- Puréed foods often need to be blended with a liquid. You can use liquids such as gravy, milk or stock. Don't use water to thin pureed food as it's not nutritious.
- A small whisk is useful for adding in thickening powders (for example, corn flour or a thickener such as Nutilis Clear®) to reach correct consistency.

## **Soaking solution (for Nutilis Clear® only)\***

Foods like bread, biscuits and cakes are a problem for people with swallowing difficulties. Using a soaking solution can help you achieve a smooth texture with these foods:

- Use 200ml of liquid (such as milk, fruit juice, stock) and add 1 scoop of Nutilis Clear® and whisk thoroughly.
- Use immediately and don't allow soaking solution to thicken before adding food.
- Dip food in soaking solution for 1 minute and place on plate.
- Cover and refrigerate for 1½ to 2 hours before serving.

**\* If using a different thickener, please check the manufacturer's instructions.**









## **When using a food blender**



- Make sure the blades are covered with food.
- Never overfill the container.
- Don't use boiling liquids.
- Take care if food is hot.
- Hold lid firmly (use a cloth to do this if the food is hot).
- Blend the main course and vegetables separately. Mixing foods makes it difficult to know what you're eating, flavours are lost and it may not look as appealing.



**Always check the food is the right consistency before serving!**

**4**



| <p><b>Food group:<br/>Bread, potatoes, cereals and alternatives</b></p> | <p><b>Suitable foods (must be modified to a smooth consistency with no lumps and liquid must not separate from solid)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> | <p><b>Difficult and dangerous (do not eat as they are difficult to adapt to the right consistency)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>         |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Bread</p>  | <p>No regular dry bread due to high choking risk. All bread products must have crusts removed and be softened in soaking solution, as described on page 6. Bread products do not puree well.</p>   | <p>Avoid all dry breads, crackers, oatcakes. Hard crispy rolls. Toast. Breads, crackers or oatcakes with seeds or grains.</p>   |
| <p>Breakfast Cereals</p>  | <p>Cereals served with a smooth texture and no lumps. Instant oat cereal, porridge (smooth). Wheat bisks or All Bran moistened with milk then prepared to the correct consistency. Pour off any excess milk before serving.</p>                    | <p>Avoid all dry/crispy cereals. Any flaked, puffed wheat or crispy style cereal such as cornflakes, puffed rice, crispy rice. Muesli of any variety and any cereal or porridge with 'bits' (such as nuts, dried fruit, choc chips)</p> |



| <b>Food group:<br/>Bread,<br/>potatoes,<br/>cereals and<br/>alternatives</b> | <b>Suitable foods<br/>(must be modified to<br/>a smooth consistency<br/>with no lumps and<br/>liquid must not<br/>separate from solid)</b><br><br> | <b>Difficult and<br/>dangerous<br/>(do not eat as they<br/>are difficult to adapt<br/>to the right<br/>consistency)</b><br><br> |
|--|---|--|
| Potatoes   | All potatoes must be well cooked and served pureed.<br><br>Remove the skins fully before blending to the correct consistency.   | Avoid all non-pureed potato products.  |
| Pasta  | Soft, well cooked or tinned pasta or noodles, pureed to a smooth texture. Blend hot or cold with a smooth sauce, milk, cream, butter or cheese.   | Any unblended pasta or noodle products.<br><br>Avoid dishes that form a hard/crispy topping after cooking (such as cheese or breadcrumbs).   |
| Rice   | Rice is an unsuitable food.   | Avoid rice on a level 4 diet.  |

| <b>Food group:<br/>Meat, fish<br/>and<br/>alternatives</b> | <b>Suitable foods<br/>(must be modified to<br/>smooth consistency<br/>with no lumps and<br/>liquid must not<br/>separate from solid)</b><br><br> | <b>Difficult and<br/>dangerous<br/>(do not eat as they<br/>are difficult to adapt<br/>to the right<br/>consistency)</b><br><br> |
|--|---|--|
| Meat   | All meats must be well cooked and served pureed.  | Hard, tough, fatty or gristly meat.<br>Any meat with skins.<br>Fried, breaded or battered meat.<br>Pies, pasties, sausage rolls.   |
| Fish   | Skinless, boneless fish must be well cooked and pureed.<br>Tinned fish should be pureed with mayonnaise or sauce.   | Ensure all fish bones removed.<br>No crispy coatings (such as fried, breaded or battered fish).<br>Peppered mackerel due to small particles of pepper.   |



| <b>Food group:<br/>Meat, fish<br/>and<br/>alternatives</b> | <b>Suitable foods<br/>(must be modified to<br/>smooth consistency<br/>with no lumps and<br/>liquid must not<br/>separate from solid)</b><br><br> | <b>Difficult and<br/>dangerous<br/>(do not eat as they<br/>are difficult to adapt<br/>to the right<br/>consistency)</b><br><br> |
|--|---|--|
| Eggs   | Eggs can be used in cooking and sauces.<br>Pureed egg mayonnaise.<br>Pureed creamy scrambled egg.   | Cooked eggs (such as boiled egg, poached egg, fried egg).  |
| Soya, Tofu or Quorn®                                       | All meat alternatives must be well cooked and pureed.   | Fried or crispy coatings.  |
| Pulses and Nuts  | Skinless pulses and beans, well cooked and blended until smooth (sieve to remove skins).  | Whole pulses or beans.<br>Nuts (whole or chopped).<br>Nut butters.   |

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| <b>Food group:<br/>Fruits and vegetables</b> | <b>Suitable foods<br/>(must be modified to a smooth consistency with no lumps and liquid must not separate from solid)</b><br><br>   | <b>Difficult and dangerous<br/>(do not eat as they are difficult to adapt to the right consistency)</b><br><br> |
|--|---|--|
| Vegetables                                   | <p>Use well cooked fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables. Consider sieving to remove skins or fibres.</p> <p>Ripe avocado, pureed.</p> <p>Vegetable soups, juice and smoothies must be appropriately thick and smooth.</p>   | <p>Firm, under cooked or raw vegetables. Salad.</p> <p>The following will not puree well: peas, sweetcorn, stringy vegetables such as runner beans, celery, leeks.</p>                           |
| Fruit  | <p>Pureed soft fresh, frozen or tinned fruit.</p> <p>Make sure skins and stones are removed.</p> <p>Pureed stewed fruit.</p> <p>Juice and smoothies must be appropriately thick and may need to be sieved.</p> <p>If a smooth consistency isn't achieved, consider sieving.</p> | <p>Hard fresh fruit such as apples.</p> <p>Fibrous fruit (for example citrus fruits, pineapple, rhubarb).</p> <p>Dried fruit.</p> <p>Avoid fruit with skins.</p>                                 |



| <b>Food group:<br/>Dairy</b> | <b>Suitable foods<br/>(must be modified<br/>to a smooth<br/>consistency with<br/>no lumps and liquid<br/>must not separate<br/>from solid)</b><br><br> | <b>Difficult and<br/>dangerous<br/>(do not eat as they<br/>are difficult to<br/>adapt to the right<br/>consistency)</b><br><br> |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Yogurt and<br>Fromage Frais  | Smooth, thick,<br>creamy types only.  | Yogurts with chunky<br>fruit, hard pieces,<br>crumble, nuts, cereal<br>or other toppings<br>and additions.   |
| Cheese                       | Smooth cheese<br>sauce.<br>Pureed cottage<br>cheese to a smooth<br>texture.<br>Grated cheese can<br>be melted into other<br>foods.  | Hard, solid cheese.<br>Cheese with rind.<br>Cheese spread.<br>Cooked/chewy<br>cheese.<br>Cheese with fruit<br>added.   |

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| <p><b>Food group:<br/>Desserts,<br/>sweets, and<br/>snacks</b></p> | <p><b>Suitable foods<br/>(must be modified<br/>to a smooth<br/>consistency with<br/>no lumps and liquid<br/>must not separate<br/>from solid)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>   | <p><b>Difficult and<br/>dangerous<br/>(do not eat as they<br/>are difficult to<br/>adapt to the right<br/>consistency)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>                              |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Desserts,<br/>Baking</p>  | <p>Smooth yogurt,<br/>fromage frais.</p> <p>Plain sponges – add<br/>custard, thick cream<br/>or yogurt and blend<br/>to a smooth<br/>consistency.</p> <p>Pureed fruit mixed<br/>with custard/cream.</p> <p>Smooth mousse or<br/>whipped puddings.</p> <p>Milk puddings – all<br/>smooth types.</p> <p>Plain biscuits<br/>softened in soaking<br/>solution.</p> | <p>Fruit cake, crumbles,<br/>tarts, flans, pastries.</p> <p>Scones, pancakes,<br/>meringue,<br/>cheesecake.</p> <p>Dry sponge, cakes<br/>with royal icing.</p> <p>All other biscuits.</p> <p>Ice lollies.</p> <p>Yogurts with bits.</p> <p>Milk puddings with<br/>bits/skin.</p> |



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|---|---|--|
| Chocolate and<br>Sweets                                     | Chocolate flavoured<br>dessert modified to a<br>smooth consistency.   | Bars or pieces of<br>solid chocolate.<br><br>All sweets (mints,<br>boiled sweets,<br>gummy sweets,<br>toffees, fudge,<br>marshmallows,<br>chewing gum).  |
| Savoury<br>Snacks   | Refer to savoury<br>options within other<br>food groups.  | All dry, crunchy,<br>crumbly snacks<br>(such as crisps,<br>nuts, crackers,<br>Twiglets®, popcorn<br>etc).  |
| Ice cream, Ice<br>lollies, Jelly                            | <b>Check with your<br/>Speech and<br/>Language Therapist</b>  |  |



### ***Contact telephone numbers***

If you have any questions about your recommended texture, please contact your Speech and Language Therapist on the number below:

**Name:** .....

: .....



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Ask for leaflet 1847.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet.  
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please call 01224 554149 to let us know.