



## Eating Guide for Puréed and Mechanical Soft Diets

This information explains what you can eat while you're on a puréed or mechanical soft diet.

### About Puréed and Mechanical Soft Diets

You may have to follow a puréed or mechanical soft diet if you:

- Have trouble chewing or swallowing
- Had mouth surgery
- Have trouble moving or have lost feeling in parts of your mouth, such as your lips or tongue

If you're on a **puréed diet**, you will eat foods that you don't need to chew, such as mashed potatoes and pudding. You can also blend or strain other foods to make them smoother. Liquids, such as broth, milk, juice, or water may be added to foods to make them easier to swallow.

If you're on a **mechanical soft diet**, you will eat foods that require less chewing than on a regular diet. You can eat foods with different textures and thicknesses, including chopped, ground, and puréed foods.

For more information about what to eat on a puréed or mechanical diet, read the "Puréed or Mechanical Soft Diet Guidelines" section of this resource.

If you're eating less than usual or losing weight, call your dietitian.

If you don't know which diet is right for you, or have any questions, talk with your doctor or speech or swallowing specialist. You can also speak with a dietitian in the Department of Food and Nutrition by calling 212-639-7312.

### Guide for Good Nutrition

Eat foods that have all the nutrients your body needs to keep you healthy. Your body needs:

- Proteins
- Carbohydrates
- Fats
- Fiber
- Vitamins and minerals

Also, make sure that you drink plenty of liquids. Your goal should be to drink 8 (8-ounce) glasses of water a day. However, talk with your doctor or dietitian to find out if drinking more or less liquid would be right for you.

### Protein

Protein helps your body build tissue and heal after surgery. Foods rich in protein include:

- Meat
- Fish
- Poultry (chicken, turkey)
- Milk, including dairy milk, or powdered milk
- Cheese

- Yogurt (especially Greek yogurt)
- Eggs and egg whites
- Beans and bean purée
- Nuts and nut butters
- Soy products, such as soy milk, tofu, and edamame (soy beans)
- Protein powders
- Liquid nutritional supplements, such as Ensure<sup>®</sup>, Ensure Plus<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>, or Boost Plus<sup>®</sup>

## Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are starches and sugars. They should make up at least half of the calories you eat. Most of the carbohydrates in your diet should come from:

- Starchy vegetables (potatoes, green peas, squash)
- Whole grains (oatmeal, brown rice)
- Cereals
- Breads
- Pasta

## Fat

Fat is the most concentrated source of calories. For example, 1 teaspoon of oil has 45 calories while 1 teaspoon of sugar has 20 calories. Some fat in our diets is necessary and healthy. Fats are in:

- Meats
- Dairy
- Coconut and canned coconut milk or cream
- Nuts and nut butters
- Seeds
- Vegetable oils
- Avocados
- Olives
- Fried and sautéed foods
- Baked goods

Some fats are healthier for you than others. Unsaturated fats are healthier for you than saturated fats.

Unsaturated fats are found in:

- Olive oil
- Canola oil
- Peanut oil
- Fish oil
- Avocado

Saturated fats are found in:

- Meat
- Full-fat dairy products (whole milk, cheeses, heavy cream, cream cheese)
- Butter
- Coconut and coconut products, such as coconut oil
- Palm oil

Eating too much fat can make you gain weight. If your goal is to gain weight, try to eat healthier (unsaturated) fats. If you're trying to lose weight, or are already at a healthy weight, choose low-fat foods when planning your meals.

## Fiber

There are 2 kinds of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber is found in barley, oats, and in skinless fresh fruits. Soluble fiber can help make your bowel movements softer and slow your digestion.

Insoluble fiber is found in the skins of fruits and vegetables, legumes (beans, lentils), seeds, and whole grains. It's not broken down in your intestines and adds bulk to your bowel movements (stool). This can help you have more regular bowel movements. Even if fruits and vegetables are blended or juiced, the fiber is still there if the pulp hasn't been removed.

It's important to get enough of both kinds of fiber.

For more information about managing constipation, read the "Managing Symptoms and Side Effects Through Nutrition" section of *Eating Well During and After Your Cancer Treatment*.

## Vitamins and minerals

Vitamins and minerals are found in all foods in different amounts. People who eat a well-balanced diet will most likely not need a vitamin supplement. Talk with your doctor if you're thinking about taking a supplement.

## Lactose

Lactose is a sugar found in milk and milk products, such as yogurt, cheese, and ice cream. Many people have trouble digesting lactose, which is called lactose intolerance. This may cause gas, cramping, or diarrhea (loose or watery bowel movements).

If this is a problem for you, you may want to try dairy products that have little or no lactose. You can look for low-lactose or lactose-free milk and cheese products in your supermarket's dairy section. Lactaid® is a brand that has several of these products.

Many people are able to get nutrients from dairy products by eating cheese or yogurt. These foods have less lactose than milk or ice cream. You can also try the following non-dairy, lactose-free foods and beverages:

- Rice milk or cheese
- Soy products, such as soy milk, cheese, and yogurt
- Almond products, such as almond milk, cheese, or yogurt
- Tofu

## Puréed or Mechanical Soft Diet Guidelines

Here are some foods to include and avoid while you're on a puréed or mechanical soft diet.

### Puréed diet

Type of Food	Include	Avoid
<b>Milk and Dairy Products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk, smooth yogurt (plain or without fruit pieces), buttermilk, evaporated or condensed milk, milkshakes, and malts</li> <li>• Puréed cottage cheese, thin ricotta cheese, mild or processed cheeses melted into a sauce</li> <li>• Ice cream and frozen yogurt</li> <li>• Liquid nutritional supplements, such as Ensure or Carnation Breakfast Essentials</li> <li>• Smoothies made with bananas, peaches, or sorbets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid cheeses, regular cottage cheese, farmer cheese, and pot cheese</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetable juices like V8 or tomato juice, puréed cooked vegetables, and baby food vegetables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others, even well-cooked vegetables that don't require a lot of chewing</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit juices and nectars (without pulp)</li> <li>• Smooth applesauce, puréed fruits, baby food fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others, including mashed banana and canned fruits</li> </ul>
<b>Starches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooked cereals, Cream of Wheat®, Farina®, Cream of Rice®</li> <li>• Smooth or blended oatmeal, baby oatmeal, or baby cereal</li> <li>• Hominy grits</li> <li>• Whipped or smooth mashed potatoes</li> <li>• Puréed pasta, puréed rice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others</li> </ul>
<b>Meat or Meat Substitutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strained or puréed meat, fish, and poultry</li> <li>• Smooth chicken, tuna, and egg salad (no celery or onion)</li> <li>• Soufflés, hummus, and puréed beans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others, including scrambled, fried, poached, hard-boiled, and soft-boiled eggs</li> </ul>
<b>Fats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butter, margarine, sour cream, cooking fats and oils, and gravies</li> <li>• Whipped toppings and heavy cream</li> <li>• Mashed or blended avocado with puréed foods items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others</li> </ul>
<b>Soups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broth and bouillon</li> <li>• Soups with puréed or strained vegetables</li> <li>• Strained or puréed cream soups</li> <li>• Puréed chicken noodle or chicken and rice soup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others</li> </ul>

Type of Food	Include	Avoid
<b>Sweets and Desserts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth custards and puddings</li> <li>• Sherbet, ice cream, and frozen yogurt</li> <li>• Flavored fruit ices, popsicles, fruit whips, flavored gelatins</li> <li>• Clear jelly, honey, sugar, and sugar substitutes</li> <li>• All syrups (such as chocolate syrup and maple syrup)</li> <li>• Mousse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others, including anything made with coconuts, nuts, or whole fruits</li> </ul>
<b>Beverages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All beverages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any containing raw eggs</li> </ul>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise</li> <li>• Herbs and spices</li> <li>• Liquid sauces, such as barbeque or teriyaki sauce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuts</li> <li>• Coconuts</li> <li>• Olives</li> <li>• Pickles</li> <li>• Seeds</li> </ul> <p>* Do not eat spicy or acidic foods if you have mouth sores.</p>

### Sample menu for a puréed diet

Here are some examples of puréed diet options for each meal of the day. If you need help planning your meals, call the Department of Food and Nutrition to speak with a dietitian.

Meal or Snack	Puréed Diet
<b>Breakfast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit juice without pulp</li> <li>• Puréed banana</li> <li>• Cooked cereal with milk</li> <li>• Puréed cooked egg</li> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Coffee or tea</li> </ul>
<b>Mid-morning snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vanilla or flavored yogurt</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any puréed or strained soup</li> <li>• Puréed chicken salad</li> <li>• Puréed green beans</li> <li>• Puréed fruit</li> <li>• Puréed rice</li> <li>• Tea with sugar</li> </ul>
<b>Mid-afternoon snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure plus</li> </ul>
<b>Dinner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puréed or strained soup</li> <li>• Puréed meat or fish</li> <li>• Mashed potato</li> <li>• Puréed vegetables with olive oil or butter</li> <li>• Applesauce</li> </ul>
<b>Evening Snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vanilla Pudding</li> </ul>

## Mechanical soft diet

You should moisten the following mechanical foods with a sauce, gravy or condiments.

Type of Food	Include	Avoid
<b>Milk and Dairy Products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk, buttermilk, eggnog, yogurt (plain and with fruit), milkshakes, evaporated and condensed milk, and malts</li> <li>• Cottage cheese, soft cheeses (such as ricotta or farmer), pot cheese sauces, and grated and shredded cheeses</li> <li>• Ice cream and frozen yogurt</li> <li>• Liquid nutritional supplements, such as Ensure or Carnation Breakfast Essentials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard cheeses and cheeses that have nuts and seeds in them.</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any well-cooked, diced vegetables, such as carrots, peas, green beans, beets, butternut or acorn squash, and wax beans moistened with a sauce or oil</li> <li>• Chopped or creamed spinach</li> <li>• Puréed vegetables</li> <li>• Baby food vegetables</li> <li>• Vegetable juices, such as V8 and tomato juice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raw vegetables</li> <li>• Stir-fried vegetables</li> <li>• Fried vegetables</li> <li>• Lettuce</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ripe bananas</li> <li>• Any canned fruits</li> <li>• Any cooked fruits (without the skins), mashed or diced into small pieces</li> <li>• Applesauce, puréed fruits, and baby food fruits</li> <li>• Nectars and fruit juices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh fruits</li> <li>• Fruit skins</li> <li>• Fruits with pits</li> <li>• Dried fruits</li> </ul>
<b>Starches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any diced soft breads, such as soft rolls, muffins, soft French toast, and pancakes – moisten these with butter and syrup</li> <li>• Dry cereal soaked in a small amount of milk</li> <li>• White or brown rice with a sauce or gravy</li> <li>• Casseroles</li> <li>• Cooked cereals, Cream of Wheat, Farina, Cream of Rice, oatmeal, hominy grits, and couscous</li> <li>• Diced soft pastas or noodles, pasta salad, pastina, orecchiette, macaroni and cheese, and diced ravioli or tortellini</li> <li>• Soft whole grains (such as barley, farro) moistened with sauce or gravy</li> <li>• Mashed, baked, or creamed potatoes, and sweet potatoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rye-crisps, dry crackers, popcorn, taco shells, and Melba toasts</li> <li>• Breads and muffins with seeds or nuts, pita bread, rye and pumpernickel breads, bagels, French or sourdough breads, and toast</li> <li>• Chow mein noodles</li> <li>• Any cakes or breads made with nuts, seeds, raisins, or dates</li> <li>• Kasha (buckwheat), wild rice, shredded wheat, and granola</li> <li>• Hash browns, fried potatoes, potato skins, and French fries</li> </ul>

Type of Food	Include	Avoid
<b>Meat or Meat Substitutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground, finely chopped tender meat or poultry with sauce or gravy</li> <li>• Soft chicken salad, creamed tuna salad (without celery), and egg salad (without celery)</li> <li>• Diced meat loaf, meatballs, salmon loaf, and croquettes</li> <li>• Casseroles</li> <li>• Diced baked or broiled fish (fillet of sole, roughy, flounder, and salmon)</li> <li>• Well-cooked beans and tofu</li> <li>• Scrambled eggs or diced hard-cooked eggs</li> <li>• Cheese quiche without the crust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole cuts or diced meat or poultry</li> <li>• Hot dogs, sausage, knockwurst, bratwurst, pork chops, steak, and bacon</li> <li>• Fried fish</li> <li>• Haddock, halibut, and tuna</li> <li>• Shellfish</li> <li>• Chili with beans</li> </ul>
<b>Fats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butter, margarine, and cooking fats and oils</li> <li>• Gravy, whipped toppings, salad dressings, and mayonnaise</li> <li>• Finely chopped olives</li> <li>• Avocado</li> <li>• Creamy nut butters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuts (such as almonds, cashews, peanuts, and pecans)</li> <li>• Seeds</li> <li>• Coconuts</li> <li>• Whole olives</li> <li>• Crunchy nut butters</li> </ul>
<b>Soups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broth and bouillon</li> <li>• Soups with puréed or strained vegetables</li> <li>• Strained or puréed cream soups</li> <li>• Diced chicken noodle soup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any soups with chunks of meat or crunchy vegetables</li> </ul>
<b>Sweets and Desserts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seedless jellies, honey, sugar, sugar substitutes, and syrup</li> <li>• Ice cream, frozen yogurt, puddings, and custards</li> <li>• Pies (without crust), pastries, and cakes without seeds, nuts, or dried fruits moistened with a milk or seedless jelly</li> <li>• Diced soft cookies moistened with milk</li> <li>• Mousse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any sweets and desserts with coconut, nuts, or dried fruits</li> <li>• Granola bars</li> <li>• Pies with crust</li> <li>• Chewy, crunchy, or hard candy</li> <li>• Jelly or jam with seeds</li> <li>• Crunchy cookies</li> <li>• Licorice, taffy, and caramel</li> </ul>
<b>Drinks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water, coffee, tea, carbonated drinks, hot cocoa, fruit punch, and coconut water</li> <li>• Gatorade®, Pedialyte®, Isopure® lemonade without pulp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any drink with raw eggs</li> </ul>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise</li> <li>• Herbs and spices</li> <li>• Jelly</li> </ul>	<p>* Do not eat spicy or acidic foods if you have mouth sores.</p>

## Sample menu for a mechanical soft diet

Here are some examples of meals you can have when you're on a mechanical soft diet. If you need help planning your meals, call the Department of Food and Nutrition to speak with a dietitian.

<b>Meal or Snack</b>	<b>Mechanical Soft Diet</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soft, diced peaches</li><li>• Cereal softened in milk</li><li>• Diced, soft pancakes with syrup and butter</li><li>• Scrambled eggs</li><li>• A soft butter roll cut into small pieces</li></ul>
<b>Mid-morning snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yogurt</li></ul>
<b>Lunch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vegetable barley soup</li><li>• Chicken salad or egg salad</li><li>• Diced, well-cooked spinach</li><li>• Canned fruit cocktail</li></ul>
<b>Mid-afternoon snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure plus</li></ul>
<b>Dinner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soup</li><li>• Baked fish filet (boneless) with sauce</li><li>• Diced, soft potatoes</li><li>• Diced, well-cooked broccoli with olive oil or butter</li><li>• Canned, diced pears</li></ul>
<b>Evening Snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rice Pudding</li></ul>

## Planning Your Meals

Changing your eating habits can be hard. It's best to plan ahead for meals. This can help make sure you have enough of the right foods to eat at mealtimes. Here are some questions to think about when planning your meals:

- Where will you be eating? (At home, a restaurant, work, someone else's house)
- If you're eating at a restaurant, can you call ahead and request special meals?
- Will you have a kitchen and refrigerator available? Can you boil water? Can you microwave? Can you use a blender or food processor?
- Can you carry a thermos with food already prepared and ready to eat?

## Eating at home with family and friends

Most foods can be changed to meet your needs. For example, a portion of soup can be put aside, then strained or blended.

Many main dishes, such as noodles, stews, and casseroles, can be put into a blender with some liquid. You can use milk, gravy, tomato sauce, broth, juice, or water. Add liquid until the food is the right consistency.

## Kitchen items to help prepare foods

Here are some items that you may find helpful to prepare your foods at home:

**Blender:** You can use a blender for all types of foods including meats, vegetables and fruits, but you may have to add liquid to make the food the right texture. Blenders are great for soups and shakes. However, they're not always the best to use for making 1 portion.

**The Magic Bullet® and Nutribullet®:** These are small blenders that don't take up a lot of space. The Vitamix® and Ninja® are other powerful blenders that can purée a variety of foods.

**Hand-held blender:** You can use a hand-held blender to quickly purée your favorite soups right in the pot. It can also be used to soften well-cooked foods in a small bowl for 1 or 2 portions.

**Food processor:** Food processors are useful for shredding, slicing, chopping, or blending foods. It comes in different sizes. If you often prepare just 1 portion of food, buy a small processor.

**Household mesh strainer or sieve:** You can use this to strain fruits and vegetables, but not meats. They are inexpensive, good to make 1 portion, and don't need electricity. However, this method can be slow.

**Baby-food grinder:** This item can often be found in stores that sell baby clothes or furniture. They are good for all foods and require no liquid. The small ones are ideal for grinding 1 portion of food. They can be hand or battery-operated.

However, when using a baby-food grinder, food may not come out as smooth as some people may need. Ask your dietitian, doctor, or speech or swallowing therapist if it's right for you.

## Eating Out

Eat at restaurants that offer a variety of foods and that will cater to people on special diets. Many places will purée or prepare foods for your needs. Call ahead and speak to a manager or chef. You may be surprised at how helpful they will be. You may also want to order sides of broth, gravy, or milk to moisten your foods.

Here are some ideas of things you can order. Some of these may need to be mashed or blended for the puréed diet:

### **Breakfast**

- Fruit and vegetable juices
- Fruits
- Hot cereal
- Cold cereal softened in milk (for mechanical soft diets)
- Scrambled eggs or chopped, hard-boiled eggs for mechanical soft diets
- Soft breads, such as muffins and pancakes, soaked in liquid to soften them for mechanical soft diets
- Coffee, tea, or hot chocolate

### **Lunch and dinner**

- Fruit and vegetable juices
- Soups, which can be easily blended or strained in the restaurant. Egg drop soup is a good source of protein

### **Main dishes**

- Ground meat products, such as hamburger patties, meatloaf, and meatballs
- Soft, flaky fish (such as fillet of sole, flounder, or tilapia) steamed, baked, or broiled
- Noodles and macaroni dishes, blended for puréed diets
- Soufflés
- Cottage cheese and soft fruit platters
- Sandwiches, such as tuna or egg salad on soft bread

### **Vegetables**

- Baked or mashed potatoes
- Any soft cooked vegetables, such as cooked carrots
- Creamed spinach
- Vegetable soufflé
- Guacamole (some may be spicy)
- Hummus

### **Desserts**

- Ice cream or frozen yogurt
- Gelatin desserts
- Milkshakes
- Mousse
- Puddings and custards
- Applesauce or other soft fruits
- Fruit sorbets

It's also possible to eat away from home, such as at work or at a friend's house. Here are some tips for taking food with you while you're away from home:

- Bring a food grinder or small food processor. If electricity is needed, make sure it's available where you're going.
- Buy a thermos. Make soup or hot cereal and carry it with you.
- Ask if there is a microwave where you're going. You can make food at home and freeze it in portion-sized, microwave-safe containers or Zip-Loc® bags. Bring the food with you in an insulated pack and heat it when you want to eat.

- Freeze soups or puréed foods in ice cube trays. Cover the tray with foil or plastic wrap to prevent freezer burn. When you're hungry, use 2 or 3 cubes for a small meal or snack, or more cubes for a larger meal.
- Fruit ices

## Your Caloric Needs

Your caloric needs are the number of calories you need every day to maintain your weight. You get calories from food and drinks. Eating the number of calories your body needs can help you maintain your weight.

You can adjust the amount of calories you eat in order to reach your weight goal:

- If you need to gain weight, you can increase the number of calories you eat or drink.
- If you need to lose weight, you can decrease the number of calories you eat or drink.

Each person has needs a different number of calories. This is based on:

- Age
- Sex
- Height and weight
- Level of physical activity

Generally, people who are older or less active need fewer calories. Your doctor and dietitian can help you find out how many calories you need every day

The easiest way to check if you're eating enough is to weigh yourself. Try to weigh yourself twice a week and write down how much you weigh. This will help you keep track of your weight loss or gain.

## Tips for adding more calories to your diet

If you need to eat more calories, here are some easy tips:

- Eat small meals 6 to 8 times a day instead of 3 main meals.
- Add 2 to 4 tablespoons of canned coconut milk or cream to smoothies, shakes, cereals, or yogurts for extra calories. You can also add it to rice or diced chicken for extra calories, flavor, and moisture.
- Choose creamy soups rather than soups with clear broths.
- Have puddings and custards rather than gelatin desserts, such as Jell-O®.
- Add sauces, gravies, or extra vegetable oil to your meals.
- Drink apricot, pear, or peach fruit nectars. They are less acidic than other nectars.
- Drink fruit shakes or fruit smoothies made with yogurt or ice cream.
- Make ice cubes from milk or fruit nectar. Use these high-calorie ice cubes in smoothies or to keep your shakes cold. As they melt, they will add calories to your beverages.
- Drink high-calorie drinks, such as milkshakes, soy milkshakes, or pasteurized eggnog.
- Drink a liquid nutritional supplement, such as Ensure or Boost, instead of milk to make a nutritious, high-calorie milkshake.
- Add honey to smoothies, tea, yogurt, hot cereals, shakes, or ice cream.
- If you aren't on a low-fat diet, add sour cream, half and half, heavy cream, or whole milk to your foods. You can add it to mashed potatoes, sauces, gravies, cereals, soups, and casseroles.
- Add mayonnaise to your eggs, chicken, tuna, pasta, or potatoes to make a smooth, moist salad.

- Add avocado to dishes or smoothies.
- Add nut butters, such as peanut butter, to shakes and smoothies.

## Tips for adding more protein to your diet

If you need to increase the amount of protein in your diet, here are some easy tips:

- Add tofu to cooked vegetables, soups, smoothies, or in place of chicken or meat if you're having difficulty eating animal proteins.
- Add cooked eggs to your soups, broths, and cooked vegetables. Purée the cooked eggs, if needed.
- Use plain Greek yogurt in smoothies, cream sauces, or wherever you would use sour cream.
- Use a plain protein powder, such as a whey protein powder, in liquids and shakes.
- Add cheese (shredded or grated) to your soups, cooked eggs, vegetables, and starches.
  - For example, adding full-fat ricotta cheese can moisten a dish and add calories and protein. Add cottage cheese to smoothies, purées, or canned fruits.
- Use fortified milk (see recipe in the “Recipes” section) rather than regular milk to double the amount of protein in it. Use this milk in shakes, hot cereals, mashed potatoes, hot chocolate, or with instant puddings to create a high-protein, high-calorie dessert. You can also add non-fat dried milk powder alone to purées and smoothies to add more calories and protein.
- Grind some nuts with a coffee grinder and add to them to your smoothies, hot cereals, puddings, or yogurts.

## Liquid nutritional supplements

If you can't make your own shakes, there are many nutritional supplements that you can buy. Some are high calorie, ready-prepared drinks that have vitamins and minerals added to them. Others are powders that you can mix into other foods or drinks. Most are also lactose-free, which means that you can have them even if you're lactose intolerant.

Check your local market or drug store to see if they carry any of the brands below. You can also order them online for home delivery.

Liquid Nutritional Supplement	Calories	Protein (g)	Water (mL)	Lactose Free
Ensure (8 ounces)	220	9	196	Yes
Ensure Active Clear™ (10 ounces)	180	9	274	Yes
Ensure Plus™ (8 ounces)	350	13	180	Yes
Ensure Enlive (8 ounces)	350	20	180	Yes
Ensure Compact (4 ounces)	220	9	85	Yes
Ensure Pudding (4 ounces)	170	10	NA	Yes
Glucerna® (8 ounces)	200	10	200	Yes
Boost (8 ounces)	240	10	200	Yes
Boost Plus (8 ounces)	360	16	185	Yes
Boost Compact (4 ounces)	240	10	87	Yes

Liquid Nutritional Supplement	Calories	Protein (g)	Water (mL)	Lactose Free
Boost Glucose Control® (8 ounces)	190	16	200	Yes
Boost Nutritional Pudding (5 ounces)	240	7	93	Yes
Carnation Breakfast Essentials® Powder (1 packet)	130	5	NA	No
Carnation Breakfast Essentials Ready-to-Drink (11 ounces)	250	14	285	No
Boost VHC (8 ounces)	530	22.5	168	Yes
Scandishake® (1 packet)	440	5	NA	No
Scandishake Lactose Free (1 packet)	430	8	NA	Yes
Resource® Boost Breeze (8 ounces)	250	9	196	Yes
Resource Benecalorie® (1.5 ounces)	330	7	NA	Yes
Resource Beneprotein® Instant Protein Powder (7 grams)	25	6	NA	Yes

## Managing Treatment Side Effects

During and after chemotherapy and radiation therapy, some people have side effects that make it hard to eat. Here are some tips to help you manage these side effects.

### Taste changes

Food may taste different during and after chemotherapy or radiation therapy. In the weeks after finishing chemotherapy, your taste should slowly go back to normal. It may take a little longer for your taste to come back after radiation therapy.

Try some of these tips to deal with taste changes:

- Try different foods. You might find a new food that you like.
- Retry foods every week or 2 to see if the taste has returned.
- Eat fish, eggs, cheese, or milk instead of meat. These may taste better.
- Try different seasonings, including herbs and spices. Use salt if you aren't on a low-salt diet.
- Adjust the sugar levels in the food to your taste.
- If the food you're eating tastes metallic, use plastic utensils or glassware for cooking.
- Try cold foods or foods at room temperature.
- Marinate your foods in fruit nectars, duck sauce, or citrus juice.
- Take care of your mouth. Brush your teeth and tongue when you wake up, after each meal, and at bedtime.

### Sore mouth

People who have had chemotherapy or radiation may have a sore mouth. If this is a problem for you, try the following:

- Eat mild foods, such as milks, custards, or puddings.

- Ask your doctor for a mouth spray to control pain while you eat.
- Do not eat foods that are:
  - Acidic, such as orange juice and tomato sauce.
  - Spicy
  - Salty
  - Too hot
  - Too cold
- Liquid or soft foods, such as soufflés or casseroles, may be easier to swallow than solid foods. Try foods with different textures to see what feels best.

## Dry mouth

Eating can be hard when your mouth is dry and doesn't make enough saliva. Try these tips:

- Choose soft, moist foods.
- Add gravies, sauces, applesauce, or other liquids to your foods. Have a spoonful of warm soup, or other liquid, between mouthfuls of food.
- Try foods made with gelatin, such as mousses. They slide down the throat more easily.
- Always carry a bottle of water with you. You can also try carrying a small, clean spray bottle filled with water. Spray water in your mouth throughout the day to keep it moist.
- Try eating sugar-free mints or sugar-free gum to make more saliva.
- If you're having trouble maintaining your weight, drink liquids that have calories instead of water, such as fruit juices, fruit nectars, and liquid nutritional supplements (Ensure).

## Call Your Doctor if You:

- Are coughing a lot during meals
- Get food stuck in your mouth or throat
- Have trouble breathing
- Have a lot of phlegm

## Recipes

Many of these recipes came from people who were on these diets. We hope they are helpful.

For additional recipes, tips, and ideas, check out the book *Eat Well Stay Nourished*. It was written by Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer (SPOHNC). You can order it online at [www.spoync.org/recipe\\_resource\\_guide.php](http://www.spoync.org/recipe_resource_guide.php) or by calling 800-377-0928.

## Drinks

These are good drink options if you want to increase your calories. Try various fruits and juices.

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### Fortified milk

Use this recipe to increase the calorie and protein content of a glass of milk. Also, use it as a substitute for milk in your favorite recipes for soups or custards.

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup of non-fat dried milk powder
- 1 quart of skim or 1% milk (use whole milk if you need extra calories)

#### Recipe

1. Combine all the ingredients.
2. Stir well.

You can store any leftover fortified milk in your refrigerator.

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### Milkshake

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup of milk
- 1 cup of ice cream or frozen yogurt

#### Recipe

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend well.

You can also add malted milk powder, syrups, nut butters, or fruits. Try other flavors and consistencies you may enjoy.

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### Choco-Banana Swirl

#### Ingredients

- 2/3 cup of vanilla yogurt
- 2/3 cup of vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt
- 1/4 cup of chilled and sliced ripe banana (about half of a medium banana)
- 2 teaspoons of chocolate-flavored syrup

#### Recipe

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until the mixture is smooth.

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### Fruit Smoothie

#### Ingredients

- 2/3 cup of vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup of fruit nectar
- 2/3 cup of chilled or frozen fruit of your choice
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- 4 ice cubes

#### Recipe

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until the mixture is smooth.

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### Blender Breakfast

This drink is easy to make and is full of calcium, vitamins, and fiber.

#### Ingredients

- 1 banana, peach, or nectarine, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1/2 cup of milk or fortified milk (you can also use 1/2 cup of low-fat yogurt instead)
- 1 teaspoon of sugar or honey
- 1 tablespoon of natural bran

#### Recipe

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until the mixture is smooth.
3. Pour into a tall glass.

## Sauces

Use these sauces to moisten your foods and make them more tasty. Some are used in other recipes in this resource.

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### Basic White Sauce

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup of skim, 1%, whole, or fortified milk
- 2 tablespoons of any kind of oil or butter
- 2 to 3 tablespoons of flour

#### Recipe

1. Mix the flour and oil or butter in a saucepan.
2. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until the mixture is smooth and bubbly.
3. Remove from heat.
4. Stir in the milk.
5. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
6. After a few minutes, it will begin to thicken. The more flour you add, the thicker the sauce will be.

You can also make a basic brown sauce, use  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of low-sodium beef or chicken broth instead of milk.

## Soups

Eating soup is a good way to get more liquid and vegetables in your diet. Try some of these recipes or change the ingredients to make it right for you.

If you're on a puréed diet, you must put the soup through a blender or strainer. People on a mechanical soft diet can tolerate some of these soups without having to blend them.

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### Creamy Soup

This is a recipe for a basic creamy soup. Add whichever vegetables and spices you like.

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup of cooked Basic White Sauce (see recipe above)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of puréed vegetables or baby food vegetables
- Salt and pepper to taste

Follow the recipe for Basic White Sauce. Mix in the puréed vegetables. Add salt and butter to taste.

You can also try adding other cooked or puréed vegetables, such as green beans, carrots, broccoli, squash, peas, mushrooms, or asparagus. Try adding dill, garlic, thyme, onion, or celery.

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### Vegetarian Creamy Tofu Soup

#### Ingredients

- 2 ounces of tofu
- 8 ounces of creamy soup (see recipe above)

#### Recipe

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until the mixture is smooth.

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### Avocado Soup

#### Ingredients

- 1 ripe, medium avocado (flesh only)
- 1 small onion, cut up
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt
- 3 cups of chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup of yogurt
- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice (strained, if fresh)

Purée the avocado and onion with 1 cup of broth. Add the salt, remaining broth, and lemon juice, and mix for a few seconds. Then add the yogurt and sour cream and blend until smooth. Serve cold.

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## Spa Vegetable Soup

This is an easy way to make vegetable soup. You can change the vegetables as much as you like.

### Ingredients

- 3 cups of chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 carrot, sliced
- 1 cup of broccoli florets
- 1 cup of cauliflower florets
- ½ cup of red cabbage, thinly sliced (or try spinach)
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Recipe

1. In a saucepan, bring the broth to a boil.
2. Add the carrot and simmer for 20 minutes.
3. Add the remaining vegetables and simmer until completely cooked through.
4. Place in a blender and purée.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

You can also:

- Add other herbs and spices, as you want.
- Try adding tofu chunks to increase the amount of protein.
- Drizzle some olive oil into the soup as you purée it for extra calories.

## Cereals

Try these recipes for a healthy start to your day.

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### Cooked Cereals

- When making instant hot cereals, use milk instead of water to provide more nutrients and calories. You can use skim, 1%, whole, soy, almond, rice, or fortified milk. Some people also add heavy cream or half and half for extra calories.
- Add applesauce, puréed banana, cinnamon, honey, yogurt, nut butters, or brown sugar and blend.

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## High-protein Oatmeal

### Ingredients

- 1 cup of cooked oatmeal, prepared as instructed on the package
- ½ cup of fortified milk
- 2 teaspoons of sugar, honey, or brown sugar
- 1 small jar of baby food bananas
- Cinnamon to taste (optional)

Mix all the ingredients together and serve hot.

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## Soufflé

This is appropriate for a puréed or mechanical soft diet.

### Ingredients

- ¼ cup of butter
- ¼ cup of flour
- 1 ½ cup of milk or fortified milk
- ¼ teaspoon of salt
- ½ teaspoon of Worcestershire sauce (optional)
- 4 eggs, separated (yolks and whites in different bowls)
- ½ pound of low-fat cheddar cheese

### Recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan.
3. Stir in the flour until it's well blended.
4. Remove from heat.
5. Add the milk and cook until thickened.
6. Turn off the heat.
7. Add the cheese and stir until melted.
8. Let the mixture cool
9. Beat in the egg yolks one at a time.
10. In a separate bowl, whip the egg whites until they're stiff.
11. Fold (mix gently, in small amounts at a time) the whipped egg whites into the sauce.
12. Pour the mixture into a 2-quart size casserole dish.
13. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes.

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## Cottage Cheese Pie

This recipe is only for those on a mechanical soft diet.

### Ingredients

- 3 medium eggs or egg substitute
- 2 sprigs of parsley, chopped
- 1 pound of cottage cheese
- 1 small onion, diced
- ½ cup of Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup of mozzarella cheese, diced or grated
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Cornmeal

### Recipe

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Mix eggs, cottage cheese, onion, Parmesan cheese, mozzarella cheese, and parsley together in a bowl.
3. Grease a 9-inch glass pie pan with oil.
4. Sprinkle cornmeal lightly to cover the entire pan.
5. Pour the mixture into the pie pan.
6. Bake for 45 minutes.
7. Place a toothpick into the center of the pie. If it comes out dry, then it's done.

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## Quiche Custard

This is a puréed diet version.

### Ingredients

- ¼ of an onion, chopped finely
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 tablespoon of Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup of milk, fortified milk, or soy milk
- ¼ cup of heavy cream
- 1 egg or egg substitute
- ¼ cup of cheese (swiss, cheddar, or mozzarella)
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of nutmeg

### Recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Sauté the onion in the butter until the butter melts.
3. Place onion, milk, cream, and egg in blender.
4. Blend until onions are puréed.
5. Place the cheeses into a small, greased casserole dish.
6. Pour egg mixture and seasonings over the cheese.
7. Place the casserole dish in a large pan with hot water.
8. Bake until the mixture sets, about 25 to 30 minutes.

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## Main Dishes

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### Sweet Potato Pie

This dish can be eaten as is by people on a mechanical soft diet. It must be mashed or puréed for those who are on a puréed diet.

### Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups of cooked mashed sweet potatoes (or one 15-ounce can of pumpkin purée)
- 1 can of evaporated skim milk
- ½ teaspoon of nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- ½ cup of sugar (increase to 1 cup if you prefer a sweeter pie or want to add more calories)
- Cornmeal

### Recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Mix the sweet potatoes (or pumpkin) with the evaporated milk and spices.
3. Add the sugar and mix.
4. Grease a 9-inch pie pan with oil.
5. Sprinkle the pan with cornmeal to cover it.
6. Shake off the extra cornmeal.
7. Bake for 45 minutes.
8. Place a toothpick into the center of the pie and pull it out. If it comes out dry, then it's done.

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## Lentil and Carrot Stew

### Ingredients

- 6 ounces of dry lentils
- 3 cups of water
- 4 medium carrots, peeled, quartered lengthwise, and cut into 1-inch pieces (2 ½ cups)
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 small stalk of washed, trimmed, and chopped celery (¼ cup)
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon of salt (optional)
- 1 bunch of fresh cilantro or parsley, washed
- 2 teaspoons of olive oil

### Recipe

1. Sort the lentils and throw away any stones or damaged lentils.
2. Wash them in a sieve under cold water.
3. Drain out all the water.
4. Place the lentils in a large pot.
5. Add the water, carrots, onions, celery, bay leaves, and salt.
6. Remove the cilantro or parsley leaves and set them aside as a garnish.
7. Chop the stems and roots and add them to the pot.
8. Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat.
9. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook at a very gentle boil for 55 minutes.
10. Let the mixture cool.

If you're on a puréed diet, place it in a blender and process until smooth. Garnish with the cilantro or parsley leaves when serving.

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## Chicken Tamale Pie

### Ingredients

- ½ cup of cornmeal (or polenta)
- 2 cups of chicken broth
- 1 to 2 cups of cooked chicken, cut up
- 1 cup (8-ounce can) of tomato sauce
- Dash of garlic powder
- Dash of oregano
- Dash of thyme
- Grated Parmesan or Cheddar cheese

### Recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Cook the cornmeal in the chicken broth until it's thick.
3. Cool it slightly and spread it into a greased casserole dish.
4. Grind or purée the chicken according to your needs.
5. Spread the chicken on top of the cornmeal mixture.
6. Season the tomato sauce with garlic, oregano, and thyme.
7. Spread the tomato sauce on top of the chicken.
8. Sprinkle cheese over the layer of tomato sauce.
9. Bake for 30 minutes or until the cheese melts

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## Meatloaf

### Ingredients

- 1 ½ pounds of lean ground beef or turkey
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 cup of dry bread crumbs
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cup of minced onion
- 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon of chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon of salt (optional)

### Recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Mix all the ingredients thoroughly.
3. Spread the mixture in an ungreased 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan.
4. Bake for 1 ½ hours.

If you're on a puréed diet, you can place the cooked meat loaf in a blender with some liquid and blend it to the consistency you need.

## Side Dishes

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### Winter Squash and Carrot Purée

#### Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash (3 pounds, cut in half, lengthwise with the seeds removed)
- 4 carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 clove of garlic, thinly sliced
- ¼ teaspoon of thyme
- 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 2 cups of water
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### Recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Set the squash, cut side down, on a lightly oiled baking sheet.
3. Bake it for 45 minutes or until soft.
4. Combine the carrots, garlic, thyme, and water in a saucepan.
5. Cover and bring to a boil, then simmer over low heat for 20 minutes or until the carrots are tender.
6. Transfer the contents from the pan to a food processor and purée.
7. Scoop the squash out of its skin and purée it with the carrots.
8. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
9. Spread the purée on a buttered, shallow baking dish.
10. Dot with the butter.
11. Bake for 20 minutes or until hot and serve.

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### Butternut Squash Purée

#### Ingredients

- 1 large butternut squash
- 1 tablespoon of maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon of butter or margarine

#### Recipe

1. Peel the squash and cut it into small pieces.
2. Boil until tender.
3. Mash the squash with a fork.
4. Mix the mashed squash with maple syrup and butter or margarine.

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### Lima Bean Purée

#### Ingredients

- 8 ounces of large, dry lima beans
- 3 cups of water or vegetable broth
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon (or more) of olive oil

#### Recipe

1. Sort the beans, throwing away any stones or damaged beans.
2. Wash the beans in a sieve under cold water and drain.
3. Place them in a saucepan or pot.
4. Add the water and salt.
5. Bring the mixture to a boil.
6. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and boil gently for 45 minutes, until the beans are very tender.
7. Transfer the mixture (there should be about 3 cups, including the liquid) to a food processor.
8. Add the oil and process for 20 to 30 seconds until very smooth.
9. You can also use your favorite beans or chickpeas in place of the lima beans.

## Desserts

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### Peach Sauce

Drain the syrup from any size can of peaches. Blend the peaches until they are smooth. Store in the refrigerator.

You can put this sauce over ice cream or frozen yogurt, or you can eat it on its own. Those on a mechanical soft diet can also use it to soften cakes.

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### Puréeed Fresh Fruits

You can purée any fruit in a baby food grinder, blender, or food processor. Make sure to remove any peels, seeds or stems. Sprinkle apples with lemon juice to avoid browning. You can add cinnamon or mix a few different kinds of fruit together for a fruit punch flavor.

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## Ricotta Cherry Mousse

### Ingredients

- 1 pound (2 cups) of ricotta cheese
- 3 tablespoons of sifted powdered sugar
- ¼ teaspoon of almond extract
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 2 cups of dark cherries, sliced, with pits removed (or use frozen unsweetened cherries if fresh ones are not available)
- ½ cup of semisweet chocolate chips, ground to a coarse meal in a blender

### Recipe

1. Put the ricotta in a medium-size mixing bowl.
2. Beat the ricotta with an electric mixer at high speed for about 3 minutes.
3. Slowly add sugar.
4. Stir in the extracts.
5. Cover and chill.
6. Fifteen minutes before you serve the mousse, fold in the cherries.

Serve it topped with the ground chocolate.

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## Peaches and Cream

### Ingredients

- 1 banana
- 1 peach
- ½ cup of ice cubes
- 2 tablespoons of plain yogurt
- Peach nectar

### Recipe

1. Place the banana, peach, ice cubes, and yogurt into a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Add enough peach nectar to reach the 16-ounce mark on the blender.
4. Blend until smooth.

For more information about puréed and mechanical soft diets, speak to a dietician, or call the Department of Food and Nutrition at 212-639-7312.