



Patient Education

Soft foods and thickened fluids

This handout will help answer some of your questions on what to eat and drink to improve your comfort and safety when swallowing.

Patient Name: _____

Hospital Telephone Number: 905-527-4322

Dietitian: _____ Extension: _____

Dietetic Assistant: _____ Extension: _____

Speech Language Pathologist: _____ Extension: _____

Community Contacts: _____

What is Dysphagia?

Some people have trouble swallowing when drinking and/or eating. Having trouble swallowing is called dysphagia. Signs to look for are coughing, choking, gurgly voice or having food stick in your throat when you eat or drink.

When you have dysphagia, you will need to make changes to some of your foods and drinks to make swallowing easier and safer for you.

In this handout, you will learn about:

- the best food texture for you
- foods and fluids that are easier to swallow
- foods and fluids that can cause choking
- thickened fluids and other types of fluids you can have

Which food texture is best for me?

In addition to thickened fluids, it is recommended that your foods be:

1. Soft
 - with bread products
 - no bread products
2. Other _____

Bread products are bread, toast, muffins, cakes and pies.

See the chart in this handout for your list of
foods allowed and foods to avoid

These foods may make you choke. Stay away from:

Sticky foods

- peanut butter
- toffee, caramel, jube-jube, hard candy, chewing gum
- pizza
- bagels

Dry Foods

- popcorn, chips, pretzels
- taco and tortilla shells
- cookies, crackers
- dry scrambled eggs
- dry cereals

Other

- gelatin, such as Jello®
- raw vegetables
- coconut, nuts, seeds
- dried fruit

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foods allowed and foods to avoid

Why are fluids important to me?

Your body needs fluids to function properly and prevent dehydration.



You will need to have thickened fluids to make your swallowing easier. Sometimes, people on a thickened fluid diet do not take enough fluids because the thickened fluids are filling and not always enjoyed as much as thin fluids. Some people lose the feeling of thirst even when their body needs fluid.

You need to have 6 to 8 cups of thickened fluids every day to prevent dehydration (1 cup = 8 oz).

How can I make fluids easier and safer to swallow?

Thicken your fluids to make the texture like:

- nectar – thick
- honey – thicker
- pudding – thickest

There are 2 types of thickened fluid products:

1. Fluids that come already thickened. Examples include:
 - Resource Dairy Thick®
 - Resource Thickened Juice®
(such as apple and orange)
2. Powders that you use to thicken fluids*. Examples include:
 - Resource ThickenUp®
 - Kingsmill Quick Thick®
 - Oetker UltraThick®

*follow the instructions on the package

Ask your health care provider where to purchase these products.

Can I drink water, coffee and tea between meals?

No

Do not drink water, coffee or tea.
Keep your mouth moist by using:

Yes

Take water, coffee or tea from a **teaspoon**.
Swallow after each spoonful.



Yes

Take water, coffee or tea from a **cup**.
Swallow after each sip.



Can I drink water during a meal?

No

Do not drink water during a meal.

Yes

Follow these steps to decrease the chance of food and/or fluids going into your lungs:

1. Clear your mouth of all food and fluids.
2. Swallow twice without food or fluids in your mouth. This is a dry swallow.
3. Take water from teaspoon and swallow. Repeat step 3.
4. Once these steps are done you can take water, coffee or tea from either a teaspoon or a cup as indicated on page 5.

Can I drink from a straw?

No.

It is more difficult to control the fluid in your mouth and throat when you use a straw.

What are some tips to help me swallow easier?

Eat in a calm and quiet place. Avoid busy restaurants and turn off the TV.

Moisten foods by mixing with:

- smooth gravy or sauce
 - broth
 - butter or margarine
 - mayonnaise
 - sour cream
 - yogurt
-

Recipe

KATY DRINK

½ package or 3 oz	Jello® powder, any flavour
1 cup	boiling water
1 cup	pureed fruit
½ cup	low fat, plain yogurt

Dissolve Jello® powder in boiling water.

Add pureed fruit and yogurt.

Using a wire whisk, blend until smooth.

Chill.

Notes:



Soft food and thickened fluids

You need foods that are soft with no hard or crunchy pieces.

Type of Food	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Milk Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain or smooth yogurt, pudding, rice pudding, tapioca pudding and custard • Creamed cottage cheese • Cheese that is soft or grated, cheese spread • Thick milk and thick chocolate milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice cream and sherbet • Yogurt/pudding with seeds, nuts or whole fruit • Cottage cheese and other hard cheese • Milk, unless thickened • Milkshake
Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked cereals • Bread or soft rolls • Pasta • Pancakes, waffles and french toast • Soft/moist cakes, muffins, dumplings and stuffing • Plain congee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereals with seeds, nuts or whole fruit • Dry cereals • Hard rolls • Bagels and pizza • Crackers, cookies and pastry • Taco and tortilla shells • Bread and baked goods with nuts, seeds, coconut or fruit with membranes or tough skin • Rice
Meat and Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground, finely chopped or shaved meats • Tender, moist, whole poultry • Fish - all boneless, tender and in a moist form • Canned salmon or tuna with bones mashed • Eggs - soft cooked, poached, moist scrambled or egg salad • Tofu • Legumes in a moist and finely chopped form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry, tough meat or poultry • Sausages, weiners • Bacon • Fish with bones • Dry scrambled eggs, fried eggs • Nuts and seeds • Peanut butter

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Type of Food	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Casseroles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casseroles made of combinations of minced and soft foods in smooth sauces or gravies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casseroles containing "foods to avoid" • Casseroles with seeds and nuts
Vegetables and Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thickened juices • Soft, cooked, vegetables and fruit without hulls or tough skin • Finely grated raw fruit or vegetables • Vegetables such as spinach finely chopped • All forms of cooked potatoes including french fries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable or fruit juices unless thickened • Raw vegetables • Fruits or vegetables with membranes or tough skin • Hard crunchy raw fruit • Dried fruit • Coconut • Juicy fruits such as oranges, watermelon and grapes • Soups, unless blenderized and thickened
Fats and Oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter, margarine, oil and salad dressings • Smooth or blenderized gravies and sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Other Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All soft desserts and baked goods • Jam, jelly, marmalade honey, sugar, syrups • Plain, soft chocolate bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desserts with seeds or nuts • Jello® or gelatin • Jellied fruit candies, hard candies, toffee, caramels, jube-jubes, chewing gum • Popsicle® • Pop • All others not in the "foods allowed" list