

# OPWDD CHOKING PREVENTION INITIATIVE

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency



Bureau of Behavioral  
and Clinical Service

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Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Our priority is the health and safety of the individuals we serve. As one of many steps being taken to ensure the safety of people with developmental disabilities, and to strengthen services throughout our system, the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities' (OPWDD) choking prevention initiative standardizes—statewide—our approach to food consistencies and preparation. Additionally, it will heighten awareness of choking hazards and related safety concerns.

In developing this initiative, we knew it required a sound training curriculum and consistent terminology and definitions. Following a comprehensive review of state and nonprofit practices, as well as the practices of other states, we learned that what one location considers chopped, another may consider ground. Not only were similar standards inconsistent, but so too was the level of consistency of the food itself: pureed does not mean the same thing to everyone.

We know that every individual we serve has unique needs, and to meet those needs safely and effectively, we must start from a place of common knowledge.

We also know it is imperative that every new employee throughout the system receives the same training in food preparation, as well as how to effectively carry out an individual's personal care plan. Our initiative will support the success of these essential outcomes.

I would like to thank those from state and nonprofit programs who have been involved in this process. I would also like to thank the many people throughout the system who provided information and offered suggestions. That feedback resulted in a stronger final product that will help make the system safer for the individuals we serve.

Sincerely,

Courtney Burke  
Commissioner



## Acknowledgements

The NYS OPWDD Food Consistency Guidelines were developed by a statewide committee for the Choking Prevention Initiative. This statewide interdisciplinary committee was composed of speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, dietitians and nurses who contributed their unique knowledge in combination with years of practical experience to the development process. The interdisciplinary team approach was a very effective catalyst for designing guidelines that would be practical and well utilized in the field and meet the needs of the people for whom we provide care.

We would especially like to acknowledge the contribution of the Finger Lakes DDSO Clinicians Team for their assistance in composing the Food Consistency Guidelines.

A training video presentation entitled “Preparation of Food and Liquid Consistency” is a complimentary piece developed to illustrate the recommended preparation of the referenced food and liquid consistencies in the Food Consistency Guidelines. This video presentation can be found on the OPWDD website in the training section. We appreciate and acknowledge the Central NY DDSO dietitians, the speech and language pathologist and occupational therapists that were instrumental in developing and demonstrating for this video production.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank the OPWDD Central Office staff for their review, edits and application of final touches to all of the training materials, tools and other resources for our Choking Prevention Initiative.

*This information is to be used as a guide for OPWDD standardized food consistencies. Individualized assessments by the appropriate clinicians are essential in developing the appropriate care plan for each person to meet their specific needs and provide optimal care.*

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## Introduction

Many people served by OPWDD have problems chewing and/or swallowing food, placing them at possible risk for choking or aspiration. These individuals need food and/or liquids changed in some way to make it safer and easier to eat. This packet provides definitions and guidelines that will help in the safe preparation of the food and/or liquids for specific diet consistencies. When modifying food consistencies, it is important that the appearance, color, flavor and aroma are as appetizing as possible.

It is important to remember that diet consistencies are prescribed by doctor's order.

All foods need to be prepared and served so that they maintain as much of their natural moisture as possible. This is especially true of meats. While meats must be cooked to required temperature, overcooking meats should be avoided, as overcooking results in a hard, dry product which is difficult to chew and swallow safely, and may place individuals at risk. If a meat appears to be dry after cooking, use a low fat sauce, gravy or condiment to moisten.

Before beginning any food preparation, it is important to remember to wash your hands thoroughly. Gloves are required in ICF settings by health department regulation, preventing bare hand contact with foods which will not be cooked to a required temperature or which have already been cooked. This is also a recommended best practice encouraged in all residential and program settings. The use of utensils and gloves assists greatly in the prevention of food borne illness. Please note that hand sanitizers should only substitute for proper hand washing when soap and water are not available, such as on community outings and picnics.

In the video presentation accompanying these guidelines, gloves are not used, to promote ease in viewing the consistency modification process.



## I. Terms and Definitions

- **Whole:** Food is served as it is normally prepared; no changes are needed in preparation or consistency.
- **1" Pieces Cut to Size:** Food is served as prepared and cut by staff into 1-inch pieces (about the width of a fork).
- **1/2" Pieces Cut to Size:** Food is cut with a knife or chopped in a food processor into 1/2-inch pieces (about the width of a butter knife).
- **1/4" Pieces Cut to Size:** Food is cut with a knife or a pizza cutter or placed in a food processor and cut into 1/4 -inch pieces (about the width of a #2 pencil).
- **Ground:** Food **must be prepared using a food processor or comparable equipment** until MOIST, COHESIVE AND NO LARGER THAN A GRAIN OF RICE, or relish like pieces, similar to pickle relish. Ground food must always be moist. Ground meat is moistened with a liquid either before or after being prepared in the food processor and is ALWAYS served with a moistener such as broth, low fat sauce, gravy or appropriate condiment. Hard, dry ground particles are easy to inhale and must be avoided.
- **Pureed:** Food **must be prepared using a food processor or comparable equipment.** All foods are moistened and processed until smooth, achieving an applesauce-like or pudding consistency. A spoon should NOT stand up in the food, but the consistency should not be runny. Each food item is to be pureed separately, unless foods are prepared in a mixture such as a soup, stew, casserole, or salad.

**NOTE: Any individual diet consistency may be a combination of food consistency types, such as "1/2" Pieces Cut to Size with Ground meat."**



## II. OPWDD Food Consistency Terminology

Term	How to Prepare	Size	Description	Examples
Whole	Prepared according to recipe	As prepared	No changes	Moist, tender cooked chicken breast
1" Pieces Cut to size	Cut by staff	Cut into 1" pieces	Pieces of food approximately the width of a fork	Moist, tender cooked chicken breast cut in 1" pieces
1/2" Pieces Cut to Size	Cut by staff	Cut into 1/2" pieces	Moist, tender pieces of food approximately the width of a butter knife	Moist, tender cooked chicken breast cut in 1/2" pieces
1/4" Pieces Cut to Size	Cut by staff	Cut into 1/4" pieces	Moist, tender pieces of food approximately the width of a #2 pencil	Moist, tender cooked chicken breast cut in 1/4" pieces
Ground	Prepared using food processor or comparable equipment	Relish-like No larger than a grain of rice	Moist, cohesive, no larger than a grain of rice; relish-like in appearance, must be served with a low fat gravy, sauce or condiment	Moist, tender ground chicken served with lowfat gravy
Puree	Prepared using food processor or comparable equipment	No lumps, food is not sticky, pasty or runny	Smooth, pudding like, moist	Moist, tender cooked chicken with lowfat gravy processed to smooth product with no lumps





### III. Foods That May Cause Choking

The foods listed below are difficult for some people to chew and swallow. These foods could cause a person to choke, cough or inhale food and/or liquid into the lungs (aspirate). If serving these items, watch the person closely when they are eating. Remember to follow consistency modification guidelines. (This list includes, but is not limited to, common high risk foods that may cause choking or aspiration).

Apple chunks and slices	Hard candies
Bacon	Hot dogs (see guidelines)
Bread	Jello Jigglers™
Cheese (cubed, string or melted)	Lima beans
Chewing gum	Marshmallows (including all marshmallow candy such as Peeps™)
Coconut	M&M's™
Corn	Meatballs
Crackers (especially Wheat Thins™, Triscuits™, Saltines™)	Peanut butter
Croutons	Peanuts and other nuts and seeds
Donuts	Peas
Dried fruits	Plain rice
Dried peas or beans	Popcorn
Dry cereal	Raisins
Dry meat	Raw vegetables
Dry muffins or pound cake	Refried beans
Fresh oranges and grapefruit segments	Reese's Pieces
Fruit cocktail	Sausages (see guidelines)
Granola	Snack chips
Grapes	Whole hard-boiled eggs
Gummy candies	



## IV. Guidelines for Service of Hotdogs/Sausages

Hot dogs and other sausages are served to people according to the following guidelines:

- It is highly recommended that skinless hotdogs and sausages be purchased and served.
- All hot dogs and other sausages must be cut lengthwise, and then modified to the food consistency listed in the diet order.
- Exception: Persons, who request an unsliced whole hotdog/sausage or a hotdog/sausage in natural casing, will be evaluated on an individual basis. The clinical evaluation and diet order will reflect this information.
- Adequate supervision of individuals must occur when hotdogs/sausages are served.

# Whole Diet

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency





## V. Whole Diet Consistency

**DEFINITION:** Food is presented as commonly served. No consistency changes are required. For example, sandwiches are typically served cut in half.

**WHO NEEDS THIS DIET:** People receiving this diet have no difficulty chewing or swallowing.

**WHY IS THIS DIET PRESCRIBED:** People receiving this diet do not need a change in consistency. They are typically able to cut their own food and pace themselves appropriately.

**HOW TO PREPARE:** No special instructions required. Prepare and serve food as usual.

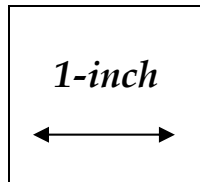
Whole Diet Meal Guidelines		
FOOD CATEGORY	FOOD PERMITTED	FOOD OMITTED
Breads	All	None
Cereals	All	None
Pasta, Potatoes	All	None
Meat, Poultry, Fish	All *slice hotdogs and sausages lengthwise before serving	None
Casseroles	All	None
Sandwiches	All	None
Soups	All	None
Fruits	All	None
Vegetables	All	None
Fresh Vegetable Salads	All	None
Dairy	All	None
Desserts, Sweets, Snacks	All	None
Fats, nuts, olives, etc.	All	None

# 1" Pieces

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency



## VI. 1" Pieces Cut to Size



**DEFINITION:** Food is served as prepared and cut by staff into 1-inch pieces (about the width of a fork). Although meats, hard vegetables, and hard fruits may be cut into 1" pieces, they are not meant to be sliced as 1" cubes. They should be sliced thin to meet the needs of the individual being served. Meats should be cut, by staff, as close as possible to the time of

consumption to prevent it from drying out.

**WHO NEEDS THIS DIET:** People receiving this diet need assistance cutting their food but have no chewing and/or swallowing problems.

**WHY IS THIS DIET PRESCRIBED:** People may be at risk for choking due to being unable to cut their own food. This diet consistency may also be used to slow the rate of eating in conjunction with pacing.

### HOW TO PREPARE:

- **BREAD:** Spread bread with condiment according to menu. Cut bread and pieces of toast into uniform 1-inch pieces.
- **PASTA:** Thoroughly cook pasta until soft. Add a small amount of either margarine, butter, broth or a low fat sauce or gravy. Cut into 1-inch pieces when serving.
- **MEAT, FISH, POULTRY:** Cook and remove the bone, gristle, and skin. Cut into 1-inch pieces. If meat is not tender and moist, moisten with a low fat sauce or gravy when serving, which allows for easier chewing and swallowing.
- **SANDWICH:** Cut into uniform 1-inch pieces. Sandwiches should not be stacked.
- **FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD:** Cut each piece of raw vegetable into 1-inch pieces. Serve mixed with choice of salad dressing.
- **FRESH FRUIT:** Cut fruit into 1-inch pieces. Avoid hard fruits and/or round shapes that could cause choking.
- **VEGETABLE:** Cut vegetables into 1-inch pieces, including sliced carrots, sliced beets and string beans. Avoid hard vegetables.



## 1" Pieces Cut to Size Meal Guidelines

FOOD CATEGORY	FOOD PERMITTED (WHEN CUT IN 1-INCH PIECES)	FOOD OMITTED (FOODS THAT CANNOT BE CUT INTO 1" PIECES AS DESCRIBED ABOVE)
Breads	Bagels, biscuits, breads, crackers, English Muffins, pancakes, pizza, rolls, soft taco shells, waffles	Hard taco shells
Cereals	All	None
Pasta, Potatoes, Rice	All	None
Meat, Fish, Poultry	All, if tender and moist. If not, serve with low fat sauce or gravy to moisten. ( <b>*Refer to Guidelines for the Service of Hotdogs/Sausages</b> )	Hard, dry meats
Casseroles	All	None
Sandwiches	All, when cut into 1-inch pieces	None
Soups	All, when ingredients are in 1-inch pieces or smaller	None
Fruits	All	Hard fruits unless sliced to meet individual needs. Fruits with pits such as cherries
Vegetables	All	Hard vegetables unless sliced to meet individual needs
Fresh Vegetable Salads	All	None
Dairy	All	None
Desserts, Sweets, Snacks	All except those listed	Hard candies
Fats, nuts, olives, etc.	All except those listed	Whole nuts, olives with pits

# 1/2" Pieces

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency





## VII. ½" Pieces Cut to Size

½ -  
inch

**DEFINITION:** Food is served as prepared and cut by staff into ½ -inch pieces (about the width of a butter knife). Food is cut with a knife or chopped in a food processor into ½-inch pieces (about the width of a butter knife). Meats should be cut, by staff, as close as possible to the time of consumption to prevent it from drying out.

**WHO NEEDS THIS DIET:** People receiving this diet *do not chew thoroughly*.

**WHY IS THIS DIET PRESCRIBED:** People receiving this diet are at risk for choking/aspiration.

### HOW TO PREPARE:

- **BREAD:** Spread bread with a condiment according to menu. Cut bread and pieces of toast into uniform ½-inch pieces. Pieces of bread and toast should not be stacked.
- **PASTA:** Thoroughly cook pasta until soft. Add a small amount of either margarine, butter, broth, low fat sauce or gravy. Cut or mash into ½ -inch pieces when serving.
- **MEAT, FISH, POULTRY:** Cook and remove the bone, gristle, and skin. Cut into ½-inch pieces. Meat should be moist and can be served with a low fat sauce or gravy, which allows for easier chewing and swallowing.
- **SANDWICH:** A sandwich must have moist ground filling (for example tuna or egg salad), or be made from thin sliced deli meats, and be cut into uniform ½-inch pieces. Any vegetable/condiments added to sandwich should be finely minced
- **FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD:** Place in food processor or chop into ½-inch pieces or less. Serve mixed with choice of salad dressing.
- **FRESH FRUIT:** Cut fruit into ½-inch pieces. Ripe fresh fruits without pits, skins and seeds should be cut into ½-inch pieces. For fresh fruits with a crisp consistency, it may be easier to place them in the food processor to reach the desired consistency. Avoid hard fruits.
- **VEGETABLE:** Cut vegetables into ½-inch pieces. Avoid hard vegetables.



<b>½" Pieces Cut to Size Meal Guidelines</b>		
<b>FOOD CATEGORY</b>	<b>FOOD PERMITTED (WHEN CUT IN ½-INCH PIECES)</b>	<b>FOOD OMITTED (FOODS THAT CANNOT BE MODIFIED AS DESCRIBED ABOVE)</b>
Breads	Crackers, pancakes, soft biscuits, soft breads, soft rolls, soft taco shells, waffles	Bagels, croutons, English Muffins, hard bread, hard crackers, hard taco shells, Kaiser rolls, pizza crusts
Cereals	All, except any that do not soften in liquids	Cereals with dried fruits or nuts, granola or hard granola bars, Grapenuts™, shredded wheat
Pasta, Potatoes, Rice	All well cooked pastas, potatoes, and rice	Potato with skins
Meat, Fish, Poultry	All, if tender and moist. If not, serve with low fat sauce or gravy to moisten. *Refer to "Guidelines for the Service of Hot Dogs/Sausages"	Hard, dry meats hot dogs and sausage with natural casing/skin
Casseroles	Casseroles include tender meat that can be cut with a fork to ½-inch pieces. All ingredients must be no larger than ½-inch pieces	Casseroles with tough meats
Soups	All, with ingredients that are ½-inch pieces.	None
Sandwiches	All, when cut into ½-inch pieces	Meats contained in sandwiches must be tender and moist



Fruits	Peeled fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits that have been stewed	Raw fresh fruits such as apples with skins, fruits with membranes grapefruit, oranges grapes with seeds, plain dried fruit such as raisins and prunes that are not stewed, hard fruits, fruits with pits (cherries)
Vegetables	Cooked fresh, frozen, canned vegetables	Raw hard vegetables such as celery, green peppers and carrots unless finely minced as part of a sandwich spread, or in potato, macaroni and pasta salads
Fresh Vegetable Salads	Cut into ½-inch pieces	Skins on cucumbers and tomatoes, celery; coleslaw with hard or long pieces
Dairy	All	None
Desserts, Sweets, Snacks	Soft desserts, cookies, donuts, cakes, pies, mini marshmallows	Hard candies, hard cookies, chewing gum, taffy, “gummy” or chewy candy, popcorn, pretzels, chips, tortilla chips, potato skins, coconut, regular size marshmallows



Fats, nuts, olives	Margarine, butter, oils, salad dressings, crumbled bacon or bacon bits, sliced olives, ground nuts as an ingredient	Hard, dry foods, loose nuts, whole olives, whole pickles
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# 1/4" Pieces

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency



## VIII. ¼" Pieces Cut to Size



¼-inch

**DEFINITION:** Food is served as prepared and cut by staff into ¼" inch pieces (about the width of a #2 pencil. A food processor may be used to achieve this consistency. Meats should be cut, by staff, as close as possible to the time of consumption to prevent it from drying out.

**WHO NEEDS THIS DIET:** People receiving this diet have difficulty chewing and swallowing food in ½" pieces.

**WHY IS THIS DIET PRESCRIBED:** People receiving this diet do not chew thoroughly and may be at risk for choking or aspiration.

### HOW TO PREPARE:

- **BREAD:** Spread bread with a condiment according to menu. Cut bread or pieces of toast into uniform ¼ inch pieces.
- **PASTA:** Thoroughly cook pasta until soft. Add a small amount of either margarine, butter, broth, or a low fat sauce or gravy. Cut into ¼ inch pieces when serving.
- **MEAT, FISH, POULTRY:** Cook and remove the bone, gristle, and skin. Cut into ¼ inch pieces. Meat should moist and tender and served with a low fat sauce or gravy, which allows for easier chewing and swallowing.
- **SANDWICH:** A sandwich must have moist filling (for example tuna or egg salad), or be made from thin sliced deli meats, and be cut into uniform ¼ inch pieces. Finely minced onion or relish may be added. Lettuce and/or tomato should not be served on sandwich.
- **FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD:** May place in food processor and coarsely grind into ¼" pieces or less. Serve mixed with choice of salad dressing.
- **FRESH FRUIT:** Cut fruit into ¼ inch pieces. Ripe fresh fruits without pits, skins and seeds should be cut into ¼ inch pieces. For fresh fruits with a crisp consistency, it may be easier to remove skins and place fruit in the food processor to reach the desired consistency. Avoid hard fruits.
- **VEGETABLE:** Avoid hard vegetables. Cut vegetables into ¼" inch pieces.



## 1/4" Pieces Cut to Size Meal Guidelines

FOOD CATEGORY	FOOD PERMITTED (WHEN CUT IN 1/4 INCH PIECES)	FOOD OMITTED (FOODS THAT CANNOT BE MODIFIED AS DESCRIBED ABOVE)
Breads	Crackers, pancakes, soft biscuits, soft breads, soft rolls, soft taco shells, waffles	Bagels, croutons, English Muffins, hard bread, hard crackers, hard taco shells, Kaiser rolls, pizza crusts
Cereals	Hot cereals; all dry cereals ground or crushed, then softened in liquids	All cereals with dried fruits or nuts, granola or granola bars, Grapenuts™, shredded wheat
Pasta, Potatoes, Rice	All well cooked pastas, potatoes, and rice	Potato with skins
Meat, Fish, Poultry	<b>All tender, moist and served with low fat sauce or gravy to moisten</b> <b>*Refer to Guidelines for the Service of Hot Dogs/Sausages</b>	Hard, dry meats hot dogs and sausage with natural casing/skin
Legumes (Beans: kidney, black eyed, cannellini, navy/ great northern/ white, black, pinto, garbanzo/ chick peas, lentils, split peas, lima, broad/fava, butter, calico, Italian, mung, soy)	<b>All cooked, except garbanzo/chickpeas unless ground/part of hummus</b>	garbanzo beans/ chick peas due to hardness
Casseroles	Casseroles containing tender ingredients in 1/4-inch pieces	Casseroles with hard or tough ingredients
Sandwiches	All, when cut into 1/4-inch pieces	Hard, dry meats, cold sliced cheese



Soups	All, when ingredients are in ¼-inch pieces or smaller	Avoid hard pieces
Fruits	Peeled fresh, frozen, canned and stewed fruits	Hard fruits, raw fresh fruits such as apples with skins, fruits with membranes grapefruit, oranges, grapes with seeds, plain dried fruit such as raisins and prunes that are not stewed, fruits with pits (cherries)
Vegetables	Cooked fresh, frozen, canned vegetables	Raw hard vegetables such as celery, green peppers and carrots unless finely minced as part of a sandwich spread, or in potato, macaroni and pasta salads
Fresh Vegetable Salads	Cut into ¼-inch pieces	Skins on cucumbers and tomatoes, celery; coleslaw with hard or long pieces.
Dairy	All	Cold sliced cheese, string cheese
Desserts, Sweets, Snacks	Soft desserts, cookies, donuts, cakes, pies	Hard candies, hard cookies, chewing gum, taffy, “gummy” or chewy candy, popcorn, pretzels, chips, tortilla chips, potato skins, coconut, marshmallows
Fats, nuts, olives	Margarine, butter, oils, salad dressings, crumbled bacon, sliced olives, ground nuts or bacon bits as an ingredient	Hard, dry foods, loose nuts, whole olives, whole pickles



# Ground

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency



## IX. Ground

**DEFINITION:** Food is put through a food processor until MOIST, COHESIVE AND NO LARGER THAN A GRAIN OF RICE (in relish like pieces, similar to pickle relish). Ground food **must always** be moist. Meat and casseroles are ground in the food processor. Liquid may be added after the food is ground in food processor. **ALWAYS** serve with a low fat sauce or gravy. **Loose dry particles of food are not acceptable and may be dangerous as they can be easily inhaled.** For example, cooked rice must be cut in food processor, moistened, and served with a sauce. Bread crumbs **must** be moistened and **never** served dry.

**WHO NEEDS THIS DIET:** People receiving this diet do not chew thoroughly and may have difficulty swallowing.

**WHY IS THIS DIET PRESCRIBED:** This diet provides a moist, cohesive consistency that does not require functional chewing and is easy to swallow.

### HOW TO PREPARE:

NOTE: For a ground diet, measure portions **before** processing.

- **BREAD/CEREALS:** without nuts, seeds and dried fruit: Spread bread with condiment according to menu. Process bread in the food processor with an appropriate liquid. Soft breads without crust, some crackers, and some soft baked goods may be moistened with an appropriate liquid and allowed to absorb **ALL** the fluid to meet the above definition before serving. For example, use milk to moisten toast without crust, graham crackers, saltines, thin plain cookies, and sliced cake without nuts, raisins, or chocolate chips. Dry cereal is ground in a food processor or crushed in a baggie into smaller-sized pieces. The cereal **MUST** be moistened with milk and **allowed to absorb** the milk before serving.
- **PASTA/RICE:** Thoroughly cook pasta/rice until soft. Adding a small amount of oil keeps most pasta/rice dishes from becoming too pasty. Process until relish-like, approximately the size of a grain of rice. **Do not over process** because rice and pasta will become pasty and difficult to swallow. Before serving, **always** add extra sauce or gravy.
- **MEAT, FISH, POULTRY:** Cook and remove the bone, gristle, and skin. **Grind** with a broth or other liquid, or grind and then mix with a broth or liquid. All meat, fish and poultry **MUST** be moistened and served with a low fat sauce, gravy, condiment or other compatible liquid to allow for ease in swallowing.



- **SANDWICH:** Sandwich ingredients are processed in the food processor with an appropriate liquid until a relish-like consistency.
- **FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD:** Salad ingredients are processed briefly in food processor until ground. To achieve proper consistency, commercial thickener may need to be added due to the higher water content of most vegetables.
- **FRESH FRUIT:** Remove peels, skins, cores, pits and/or seeds. Place in food processor and process until pieces are relish-like. Fruit needs to be moist and must stay together similar to tapioca pudding. Suggested ingredients to add to fruit: commercial food thickener or instant dry pudding mix.

**Fresh fruits such as fresh pineapple, oranges, grapefruits, plums and grapes cannot be used on a ground diet. They are too fibrous and have tough membranes or skins. Use a different fruit or a fruit juice.**

- **VEGETABLE:** Prepare and cook vegetables. Drain well; place in food processor and process until vegetables are rice size with relish-like consistency.

Ground Meal Guidelines		
FOOD CATEGORY	FOOD PERMITTED (WHEN PROCESSED TO A RICE SIZE PIECES AND RELISH -LIKE CONSISTENCY)	FOOD OMITTED (FOODS THAT CANNOT BE MODIFIED AS DESCRIBED ABOVE)
Breads	Crackers softened with a liquid, pancakes, pizza ground with extra sauce, soft biscuits, soft breads, soft rolls, soft taco shells, waffles	Bagels, bread with nuts/fruits/seeds, croutons, English muffins, hard bread, hard taco shells, hard or crusty rolls, pizza not ground
Cereals	All, except any that do not soften in liquids	Cereals with dried fruits or nuts, granola, Grapenuts™, shredded wheat
Pasta, Potatoes, Rice	All well cooked moist pastas, potatoes, and rice, add extra sauce or gravy	Potato with skins wild rice



Meats, Poultry, Fish	<b>ALL MUST BE MOISTENED WITH A BROTH OR LIQUID AFTER BEING GROUND AND SERVED WITH A LOW FAT SAUCE, GRAVY, CONDIMENT OR OTHER COMPATIBLE LIQUID</b>	<b>Meat, poultry, and fish without sauces or gravies;</b> hotdogs/sausages with natural casing/skin
Casseroles	<b>ALL MUST BE MOISTENED WITH A BROTH OR COMPATIBLE LIQUID AFTER BEING GROUND AND SERVED MOIST</b>	Casseroles not altered per definition
Sandwiches	Ground and <b>ALWAYS</b> moistened with appropriate condiment or compatible liquid	Cold sliced cheese, peanut butter
Soups	All soups must be ground except clear and cream soups with no pieces	None
Fruits	Peeled soft fresh, frozen, canned fruits, stewed prunes and stewed raisins	Raw fresh fruits with skins, seeds and membranes such as fresh pineapple, oranges, grapefruits, plums, grapes
Vegetables	Cooked fresh, frozen, canned vegetables	Raw celery, carrots, and peppers. Skins on cucumbers and tomatoes. Raw onion unless finely ground as part of a sandwich spread or in potato, macaroni and pasta salad
Fresh Vegetable Salads	Grind into rice size pieces with relish-like consistency	Same as above



Dairy	All; cheese as an ingredient	<b>Cold</b> sliced cheese; string cheese
Desserts, Sweets, Snacks	Soft desserts, cookies, donuts, cakes, pies etc. moistened with a liquid	Hard candies, chewing gum, taffy, “gummy” candy, popcorn, chips, tortilla chips, pretzels, potato skins, coconut, Jello Jigglers™, marshmallows, or candy with marshmallows, cheese puffs or cheese balls, caramel candies, M&M’s™, Reese’s Pieces™
Fats, nuts, olives, etc	Margarine, butter, oils, salad dressing, ground bacon as an ingredient, ground olives and pickle relish. Peanut butter as an ingredient in cakes and cookies	Nuts, bacon bits, peanut butter in sandwiches or when not mixed in foods

# Puree

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency



## X. Puree

**DEFINITION:** All foods are moistened and processed until smooth (no lumps) to an applesauce-like or pudding consistency.

*Food should be prepared so that:*

- It is smooth throughout
- There are no lumps
- It is not pasty, sticky or gummy
- It is not runny
- Each food item is served separately, unless foods are prepared in a mixture such as a soup, stew, casserole, or salad.

**WHO NEEDS THIS DIET:** People receiving this diet have severe difficulties with chewing and swallowing.

**WHY IS THIS DIET PRESCRIBED:** The diet provides a smooth, moist consistency that is easy to swallow and requires little oral motor skills.

**HOW TO PREPARE:**

NOTE: For a pureed diet, measure portions **before** processing.

- **BREAD/CEREALS:** Without nuts, seeds and dried fruit: Spread bread with condiment according to the menu. Process bread in the food processor with an appropriate liquid. Soft breads without crust, some crackers, and some soft baked goods may be moistened with an appropriate liquid and allowed to absorb ALL the liquid to meet the above definition before serving. For example, use milk to moisten toast without crust, graham crackers, saltines, thin plain cookies, and sliced cake without nuts, raisins, or chocolate chips. Oatmeal and cold cereals (without nuts, berries, or raisins) must be pureed and served moistened.
- **PASTA/RICE:** Thoroughly cook pasta/rice until soft. Adding a small amount of oil keeps most pasta/rice dishes from becoming too pasty. Process until smooth (no lumps). Use an adequate amount of liquid to make smooth and moist. Before serving, **always** add extra sauce or gravy.
- **MEAT, FISH, POULTRY:** Cook and remove the bone, gristle, and skin. **Puree** with a broth or other liquid. All meat, fish, and poultry **MUST** be moistened and served with a low fat sauce or gravy to allow for ease in swallowing.
- **SANDWICH:** Sandwich ingredients are processed in the food processor with an appropriate liquid.



- **FRESH VEGETABLE SALAD:** All ingredients are processed with a liquid and a commercial thickener to obtain a safe consistency and keep the desired flavor.
- **FRESH FRUIT:** Remove peels, skins, cores, pits and/or seeds. Place in food processor and process until pieces are applesauce-like. Fruit needs to be moist and must stay together similar to tapioca pudding. Suggested ingredients to add to fruit: commercial food thickener per ½ c. serving or instant dry pudding mix.

**Note:** Fresh fruits such as fresh pineapple, oranges, grapefruits, plums and grapes cannot be used on a pureed diet. They are too fibrous and have tough membranes or skins. Use a different fruit or a fruit juice.

- **VEGETABLE:** Prepare and cook vegetables. Drain well; place in food processor and process until smooth to an applesauce-like consistency. If a baked or boiled potato with skin is used, remove skin before processing.

Pureed Meal Guidelines		
FOOD CATEGORY	FOOD PERMITTED (WHEN PROCESSED TO AN APPLESAUCE-LIKE CONSISTENCY, SMOOTH, NO LUMPS)	FOOD OMITTED (FOODS THAT CANNOT BE MODIFIED TO A PUREED CONSISTENCY)
Breads	Crackers softened with a liquid, pancakes, pizza pureed with extra sauce, soft biscuits, soft breads, soft rolls, soft taco shells, waffles	Bagels, bread with nuts/fruits/seeds, croutons, English muffins, hard bread, hard or crusty rolls, hard taco shells
Cereals	Pureed cereals including pureed oatmeal; farina, cream of rice, and Wheatena™ do not need to be pureed	Cereals with dried fruits or nuts, granola, Grapenuts™, shredded wheat
Pasta, Potatoes, Rice	All well cooked pastas, potatoes, rice, add extra sauce or gravy	Potato with skin, wild rice





Meats, Poultry, Fish	<b>ALL MUST BE MOISTENED WITH A BROTH OR LIQUID WHILE BEING PUREED; SERVE WITH A LOW FAT SAUCE, GRAVY OR SMOOTH CONDIMENT</b>	<b>Meat, fish, poultry without sauces or gravies.</b> Hotdogs/sausages with natural casing/skin
Casseroles	<b>All must be moistened with a broth or liquid while being pureed; serve with low fat sauce and gravy</b>	Casseroles that cannot be altered per definition
Sandwiches	Pureed and ALWAYS moistened with appropriate condiment and/or liquid	Cold sliced cheese, peanut butter
Soups	All soups must be processed to be similar to a smooth creamed soup consistency. Add crumbled crackers or bread crumbs when pureeing to thicken	Soups with pieces of food which <b>cannot be modified</b> to a pureed consistency. Croutons
Fruits	Peeled soft fresh, frozen, canned fruits. Stewed prunes and stewed raisins are allowed	Raw fresh fruits with skins, seeds and membranes such as fresh pineapple, oranges, grapefruit, plums, apples, and grapes
Vegetables	Cooked fresh, frozen, canned vegetables	Raw celery, carrots, and peppers. Skins on cucumbers and tomatoes
Fresh Vegetable Salads	Puree until smooth with no lumps. Add commercial thickener as needed	Same as above
Dairy	All; cheese as an ingredient	<b>Cold</b> sliced cheese, string cheese



Desserts, Sweets, Snacks	Soft desserts, cookies, donuts, cakes, pies, whipped Jello™ Smooth ice cream	Hard candies, chewing gum, taffy, “gummy” candy, popcorn, chips, tortilla chips, pretzels, potato skins, coconut, Jello Jigglers™, marshmallows, or candy with marshmallows, cheese puffs or cheese balls, caramel candies, M&M’s™, Reese’s Pieces™. Ice cream with chunks or pieces
Fats, nuts, olives, etc	Margarine, butter, oils, salad dressing; peanut butter as an ingredient in cakes and cookies; bacon as an ingredient in casseroles	Nuts, bacon, peanut butter in sandwiches or when not mixed in foods

# Liquids

Preparation Guidelines for Food and Liquid Consistency



## XI. Liquid

### DEFINITIONS:

**Thin liquids:** Liquids/fluids/beverages are served without change.

**Thickened Liquids:** are prescribed for specific individuals.

- **Nectar Thick Liquids:** This is slightly thickened.
  - Fork test: Liquid coats the fork and quickly sinks through the prongs.
  - Spoon test: Liquid leaves spoon in a fine “ribbon” or “trail” when poured or stirred, similar to heavy syrup found in canned fruit, or to maple syrup.
- **Honey Thick Liquids:** This is thicker than nectar, closer to honey.
  - Fork test: Liquid coats the fork and flows slowly through the prongs.
  - Spoon test: Liquid flows slowly from spoon but still pours, somewhat like a milkshake.
- **Pudding Thick Liquids:** This is the thickest. It does not pour, but drops from the spoon.
  - Fork test: Liquid remains on fork.
  - Spoon test: Liquid does not pour from spoon. The spoon stands up in product and liquid requires a spoon for eating.

**WHO NEEDS THIS DIET:** Thickened liquids are prescribed for some individuals with swallowing problems.

**WHY IS THIS PRESCRIBED:** Thickeners slow the flow of liquids and makes them easier to swallow.

### HOW TO PREPARE:

- Gather equipment needed for preparation:
  1. Measuring cup(s)
  2. Measuring spoon(s)
  3. Commercial thickening agent
  4. Beverage to be thickened
  5. Drinking cup
  6. Fork and spoon
- Follow manufacturer’s recommendations **EXACTLY** for measurements of both the commercial thickener and the liquid.



- Follow recommendations for waiting time for the thickener to work.
- USE NO MORE THICKENER THAN NECESSARY to avoid excess calories and over thickening.

**Note: Gelatin or “Jello™”:**

- In its plain form, reduces to a thin liquid in the mouth and is not appropriate for people who require any type of thickened liquids.
- Gelatin needs to be whipped with whipped topping or a pureed fruit to become the appropriate consistency for serving.

**Ice cream, sherbet, milkshakes and smoothies:**

- May already meet the description above for nectar thickened liquids or may need to be thickened to achieve this or another desired consistency. Remember that these products will melt at room temperature, possibly becoming unsafe by losing the required consistency.

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