



# Pureed diet - Level 4

## **Introduction**

As you are currently having difficulty with chewing and swallowing your food, you need to have a pureed diet.

It is important that you have as varied and well balanced a diet as possible.

This booklet aims to give you and your family/carers ideas for suitable food choices and provide practical tips to make meal times more enjoyable.

If you are underweight or have unintentionally lost weight recently, it is important to ensure your diet is high in calories and protein.

If you continue to lose weight, contact your dietitian. If you have not seen a dietitian, ask your GP or nurse to refer you.

If you are concerned about your swallowing, contact your speech and language therapist.

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

Any food you have should:

- Have the consistency of mousse
- Be smooth throughout
- Have **no** lumps
- Not be watery or thin
- Hold its shape and slide-off a spoon
- Not have any separate thin liquid

Any fluid in or on the food should be as thick as the puree itself. It must be a consistency that could be eaten with a fork and not drop through the prongs.

## Practical points

- Ensure you are sitting as upright as possible whilst eating and drinking. Do **not** lie down immediately after a meal.
- If you feel you need to cough, do so - it helps to protect the lungs.
- Make sure that food has been completely swallowed before taking the next mouthful. If you feel that some food is still at the back of your throat, swallow again before continuing to eat.
- Use your tongue to check food is not being caught between your cheek and gums. If you cannot use your tongue use a clean finger.
- Try not to rush when eating. Slowing down can often improve your swallowing.
- A quiet, relaxed atmosphere is best. Concentrate and do **not** talk while you are eating and drinking.
- If you are helping with feeding, make sure the person can see the food as this can help with swallowing.
- Mouthcare - look after your oral health with regular and thorough mouthcare. Brush your teeth or clean your dentures and make sure no food is trapped around your teeth or gums. This can reduce harmful bacteria which, if they “go down the wrong way” (called aspiration) can cause chest infections.

## **Equipment needed to puree foods**

- A liquidiser or food processor should be used to puree foods
- A hand blender can also be used for smaller portions
- A sieve and spoon can be used to remove lumps, pips and skins

## **Handy tips when making pureed foods**

Instead of water try to use milk, stock, gravy or sauce so that the goodness and taste of the food is not diluted.

When blending the food, a meal looks more appetising if you keep items of food separate rather than mixing them all together. Food can be piped or moulds are available to buy if desired.

It is easier to puree large portions of food than individual servings. If you have a freezer, make up a large quantity and freeze individual portions, which can then be reheated.

## **Thickeners for food**

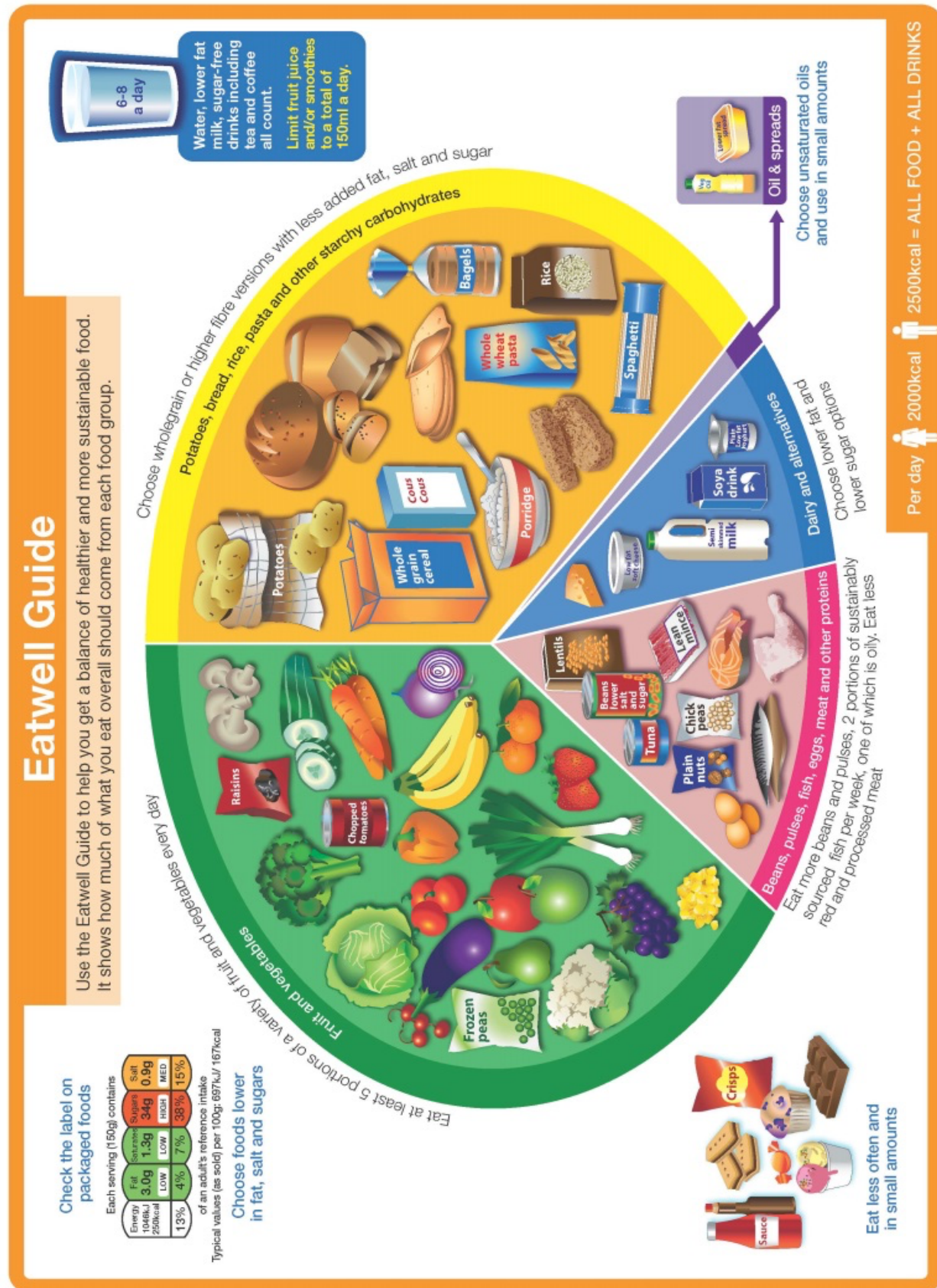
It is very important that your food has the correct consistency.

The following can be useful to thicken food:

- Cornflour
- Custard powder
- Ground rice
- Mashed potato
- Instant potato granules/powder
- Instant gravy granules

# Maintaining a healthy balanced diet

The Eatwell Guide below shows the proportions in which different types of foods are needed to have a well-balanced and healthy diet. The proportions shown are representative of your food consumption over the period of a day or even a week, not necessarily each meal time.



## **Fruits and vegetables**

Aim to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day. Choose from fresh, canned, dried or juiced.

## **Potatoes, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates**

These foods should make up just over a third of the foods we eat. Base your meals around a starchy carbohydrate. Choose higher fibre or wholegrain varieties when you can.

## **Dairy and alternatives**

Try to have some milk and dairy food (or dairy alternatives) - such as cheese yoghurt and Fromage Frais. These are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals (particularly calcium).

## **Beans, pulses, fish, meat and other proteins**

These foods are sources of protein and minerals, so it is important to eat some foods from this group. Aim for 2 portions of fish a week, including a portion of oily fish.

## **Oils and spreads**

Although some fat in the diet is essential, generally we are eating too much saturated fat and need to eat less.

## **Foods high in fat, salt and sugar**

These foods are not needed in the diet and should be eaten occasionally and in small amounts.

## **Hydration**

Aim to drink 6 - 8 glasses of fluid every day. Water, milk and sugar free drinks including tea and coffee all count. Thickened as required.

## Fruit and vegetables

Foods	Suggestions	Avoid
<b>Vegetables</b>	<p>Cook until tender, drain and puree</p> <p>Juices from cooking can be used to thin down the puree if required</p> <p>Thickeners, butter or milk-based sauces can also be added</p>	<p>Peas, marrowfat peas, green beans, butter beans, baked beans, mixed vegetables, and sweetcorn</p> <p><b><u>ANYTHING with skins</u></b></p>
<b>Fruit</b>	<p>Blend well by adding fruit juice or syrup from tinned fruit</p> <p>Fresh fruit should be peeled and any pips or seeds removed before blending</p> <p><b>If you are having juice, it may need to be thickened</b></p>	<p>Pineapple in any form</p>

## Potatoes, pasta and other cereals

Foods	Suggestions	Avoid
<b>Potatoes</b>	<p>Can be mashed with butter and milk but blend if they are still lumpy</p> <p>Instant mash is useful and can be used without being blended</p>	Roast potatoes, fritters or chips
<b>Pasta</b>	Blend well. Be careful with the consistency if sauce is added	
<b>Cereals</b>	Blended cereals with milk	Avoid cereals that cannot be blended
<b>Rice</b>	Only have ground rice, as other rice does not blend very well	

## Milk and dairy foods

Foods	Suggestions	Avoid
<b>Cheese</b>	<p>Smooth cheese spreads (with no lumps)</p> <p>Melted hard cheeses (e.g. cheddar)</p>	Hard cheeses that have not been melted to a puree (or cheese with lumps)
<b>Milk</b>	<p>Can be added to foods when pureed</p> <p><b>If having milk as a drink and you require thickened fluids, ensure this is thickened to the correct consistency</b></p>	
<b>Yoghurts</b>	Smooth plain or fruit yoghurts	Yoghurts with bits (i.e. cereal, chocolate or fruit pieces)

## Meat, fish and alternatives

<b>Foods</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<b>Meat, chicken and fish</b>	Remove any skin, bones, fat or gristle then puree to a paste and gradually add liquid such as gravy, milk or stock cubes	Minced meat

<b>Foods</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<b>Eggs</b>	Well-cooked boiled, poached or scrambled eggs and blend well to a puree  Cheese can be added before blending	Fried eggs
<b>Pulses, lentils and dahl</b>	Blend well to a paste, then add fluid (e.g. curry sauce or gravy) then drain through a sieve to remove small pieces	

## Sugary and fatty foods

<b>Foods</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<b>Butter, margarine and oils</b>	Add to puree foods for extra energy	
<b>Sugar, honey and syrup*</b>	Add to puree foods for extra energy	

**\* Be cautious with these if you have diabetes**

## Suggested meal plan

<b>Breakfast</b>	<p>Smooth porridge with no lumps or loose fluid</p> <p>Smooth yoghurt with no fruit bits</p> <p>Pureed fruit</p> <p>Smooth rice pudding</p> <p>Pureed scrambled, boiled or poached eggs</p>
<b>Light meals</b>	<p>Thick strained or pureed soup (must be thickened to the correct consistency if you are on thickened fluids)</p>
<b>Main meal</b>	<p>Pureed meat or chicken (pureed with a sauce or gravy) with creamed potatoes and pureed vegetables</p> <p>Pureed beef, lamb or chicken casserole served with creamed potatoes and pureed vegetables</p> <p>Pureed fish in a parsley or cheese sauce with creamed potatoes and pureed vegetables</p> <p>Pureed spaghetti bolognaise</p> <p>Pureed curry served with pureed rice</p>
<b>Desserts and Snacks</b>	<p>Mousse</p> <p>Custard</p> <p>Yoghurt with no bits</p> <p>Fromage Frais</p> <p>Pureed milk pudding or semolina</p> <p>Instant whip</p> <p>Pureed fruit with custard or cream (<b>only</b> have cream if you are on thin/normal consistency fluids, or blend with the fruit)</p> <p>Pureed sponge cake and custard</p> <p>Ice cream or sorbet (<b>only</b> have if you are on thin/normal fluids)</p>

## **How to increase your energy intake**

If you have lost weight, you can increase your energy intake by using the following ideas.

Your dietitian will be able to advise on the ways most suitable for you.

### **Nourishing drinks**

These are a good way to increase your protein and calorie intake. Nourishing drinks include malted milk drinks, hot chocolate, hot or cold full fat milk.

Complan (Nutricia) and Meritene (Nestle) milkshakes can be bought from a supermarket or chemist.

If you have thickened fluids remember to make sure drinks/soup are thickened. You should also avoid ice cream, sorbet and cream.

### **Fortifying foods**

Fortifying food is about adding extra calories and protein to your diet to avoid weight loss.

Here are some easy examples of how to fortify your food each day:

### **Milk**

Change to full fat or gold top milk in order to provide more calories.

#### **Fortified milk**

Milk can be fortified by adding 4 tablespoons of milk powder (e.g. Marvel, Five Pints, supermarket own brand) to 1 pint of milk.

Use this fortified milk in drinks, puddings, on cereals and in mashed potato and sauces.

## **Soup**

Make packet soup with full fat or fortified milk instead of water or try adding ¼ tablespoon of milk powder to tinned or packet soups.

Complan (Nutricia) and Meritene (Nestle) soups can be bought from a supermarket or chemist (these must be thickened if you require thickened fluids and strained to remove any bits).

## **Cheese**

Add soft cheese to cooked vegetables, mashed potatoes, soups and sauces.

## **Butter and margarine**

Use liberally on pasta, potatoes and vegetables.

**Double cream, ice cream, evaporated milk, full fat yoghurt** Use on desserts and make sure it is blended well to the correct consistency.

## **Sugar, honey, syrup (be cautious with these if you have diabetes)**

Add to cereals, puddings, and drinks if desired.

## **Useful tips**

It is important to remember that eating is a social and pleasurable activity. The following points should help make meal times more enjoyable.

- If you cannot manage 3 large meals per day, try having little and often or try and eat more on the days your appetite is better.
- When food is pureed, it may lose a little of its flavour, so it is best to taste and season after it has been pureed. A small amount of salt, pepper, vinegar or lemon juice can be used to improve flavour.
- Some foods lose colour when pureed. Adding Bovril, Marmite, tomato puree or tomato sauce can help to improve the appearance.
- Variety is important to avoid boredom, which can easily develop if the same meals are repeated too often.
- Presentation of food can help improve your appetite and may increase your interest in foods.

## Speech Therapy recommendations

<b>Fluids</b>	
<b>Diet</b>	
<b>Positioning</b>	
<b>Assistance required</b>	
<b>Additional instructions</b>	

## Example meal plan (meal or snack)

<b>Breakfast</b>	
<b>Mid-morning</b>	
<b>Lunch</b>	
<b>Mid-afternoon</b>	
<b>Evening meal</b>	
<b>Supper</b>	

## **Contacts**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your speech and language therapist or dietitian.

### **Speech and language therapist**

Name: Laura Mitchell

Telephone: 07741601201

### **Dietitian**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Leaflet developed by: Derbyshire Dietetics Speech & Language Therapy Steering Group: DDSSG  
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