

Mechanical Soft Diet (for Chewing Problems)

This guide has been prepared for your use by Registered Dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian. Diet counseling is available to address your specific needs.

This diet is used if you have difficulty chewing food. Foods should be blended, mashed, chopped or ground. They can be prepared with added liquids to make them easier to eat.

Important points to keep in mind

- Relax at mealtime and eat slowly.
- Individual chewing and swallowing abilities determine if foods should be mashed, ground, or chopped.
- Avoid any foods that are hard to chew, such as raw fruits and vegetables, coconut, and dried fruits.
- It may be helpful to soften foods like breads or crackers in soups or beverages.
- A blender or food processor may be useful in preparing foods that need to be chopped or mashed.

Food groups	Recommended	May be difficult to chew	Tips
• Breads, cereals, rice and pasta			
5 to 8 servings per day 1 serving = 1 slice bread 1 oz. ready-to-eat cereal ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta ½ bun, bagel, or English muffin 1 small roll, biscuit, or muffin 3 to 4 small or 2 large crackers 1 6-inch tortilla	Soft, enriched breads and rolls, plain crackers, plain muffins, pancakes, waffles Cooked or dry cereal without seeds, dried fruit, or nuts Rice or well-cooked pasta	Rye crisp, whole-wheat crackers; popcorn; chow mein noodles; taco shells Any foods with seeds, dried fruits, raisins, or nuts Shredded Wheat, granola, Grape Nuts®, or cereal that remains crunchy in milk	Soak dry foods in milk
• Vegetables			
2 to 3 cups per day	All vegetable juices Cooked, tender vegetables including corn Finely chopped, cooked greens Mashed, creamed or baked potatoes without the skin; French fries	Raw vegetables Hashbrowns, fried potatoes, potato skins	

Food groups	Recommended	May be difficult to chew	Tips
• Fruit			
<p><i>1½ to 2 cups per day</i></p>	<p>All fruit juices Cooked, canned, or soft ripe fruits such as soft-textured fresh fruits like bananas, soft melons, grapes, or citrus sections Pineapple tidbits</p>	<p>Raw cherries, pineapple, pineapple chunks, apples, and dried fruits</p>	<p>Blend fruit into milkshakes or yogurt Pour fruit juice or blended fruit over desserts such as cakes or soft cookies Allow fruit to ripen Finely chop or mash fruit</p>
• Milk, yogurt and cheese			
<p><i>3 cups per day</i></p> <p><i>1 cup =</i> 1 cup milk 1 cup yogurt 1½ oz. natural cheese 2 oz. processed cheese</p>	<p>Milk and milk products Soft cheeses and cheese sauces Plain cream cheese and cottage cheese Yogurt without nuts, seeds or coconut</p>	<p>Yogurt with nuts, seeds or coconut</p>	<p>To increase calories, pour cheese over vegetables, noodles, and rice Do not add raw eggs to milkshakes or drinks for food safety reasons</p>
• Meats, poultry, fish, dry beans and peas, eggs and nuts			
<p><i>5 to 7 ounces per day</i></p> <p><i>1 ounce =</i> 1 oz. cooked meat, poultry or fish 1 egg ¼ cup cooked dried beans 1 Tbsp. peanut butter</p>	<p>Ground or chopped tender meats, poultry, flaked fish without bones, shellfish Smooth peanut butter Eggs or egg substitutes Well-cooked, soft dry beans and peas</p>	<p>Whole cuts of meat or poultry; casing-on sausage and bratwurst; pork chops; steak Chunky peanut butter Bacon</p>	<p>Prepare meats by slow roasting or stewing with added gravy, broth or sauce Roast meats and poultry in oven bags to retain moisture For food safety, cook eggs until yolks and whites are set Try finely chopped egg, tuna, or meat salads Add ground or finely-chopped meats to soups, stews, and casseroles</p>

Food groups	Recommended	May be difficult to chew	Tips
• Fats, snacks, sweets, condiments, and beverages			
<i>Use in moderation to meet calorie needs</i>	Ground seasonings and spices Smooth condiments Butter, margarine, cream, cream substitute, cooking fats and oils, gravy, sauces, whipped topping, mayonnaise, salad dressing, sour cream Plain custard, pudding, sherbet, ice cream, fruit whip, flavored gelatin, cakes, and soft cookies	Nuts, seeds, or coconut Snacks or desserts that contain items which are hard to chew, such as whole or dried fruits, granola Chewy candy, licorice, taffy, caramel Hard and crunchy dessert items	Use jam and syrups to add moisture to bread, pancakes and waffles Dunk dessert items in coffee, tea or milk to soften

A Registered Dietitian Can Help

Diet counseling with a registered dietitian may include information on:

- Label reading, shopping, food preparation, adjusting recipes
- Dining out
- Combining other diet restrictions
- Additional resources regarding your personal needs

For a list of Aurora facilities with a dietitian, please call Aurora Health Care toll free at 888-863-5502.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.