

Pureed Diet (IDDSI 4)

You may need to follow a pureed diet if you have trouble chewing, swallowing, or fully breaking down (“digesting”) solid foods. “Pureed” means that all food has been ground, pressed, and/or strained to a soft, smooth consistency, like a pudding.

Helpful Hints

- Try different foods and recipes to increase the flavor of your diet. Salt, pepper, butter, salad dressings, smooth sauces, and other seasonings can be added to pureed foods to improve flavor.
- Homemade pureed foods cost less and often taste better. But for ease, you can try store bought pureed foods or strained baby foods.
- If you are having trouble getting enough to eat and/or you are losing weight, try these ideas:
 - If you are not able to eat a lot of food at one time, try eating 6 smaller meals or snacks each day instead of 3 big meals.
 - Use whole milk, juice, Ensure® or similar nutrition drinks, or other high calorie liquids to puree food instead of water or broth.
 - Try adding dry milk powder, Carnation® Instant Breakfast, or protein powder to pureed food, milkshakes, and puddings.
 - Add butter, jelly, honey, sugar, or syrup for more calories in pureed food.

Some Foods are Difficult to Puree

This handout includes a list of foods that puree very well. But some foods do not puree well. These include breads, cakes, cookies, muffins, biscuits, or other crumbly foods. Instead, they can be softened and thickened using a slurry mixture. A slurry mixture helps food stick together.

Gelatin can be used to slurry foods. You can use flavored or unflavored gelatins depending on what food you want to slurry. To use, dissolve 1 tablespoon gelatin in 2 cups of liquid. Do not chill or let solidify. Pour over food and allow to set for 15 minutes or until completely softened.

How to Puree Foods

- *Choose foods that puree easily.*

Avoid foods that are stringy, like celery and onions; foods with nuts or seeds; and foods with tough skins. Take out any pits, bones, seeds, skins, or other tough or inedible parts before you puree your food.

- *Have the right equipment.*

A food processor works best to puree foods. If you don't have one, use a good blender or hand mixer instead.

- *Cook food until it is fork tender.*

This may mean cooking foods longer than you normally do. Try using a crock pot to make big batches without much work.

- *Cut food into small pieces before pureeing.*

That way you can be sure there are no lumps.

- *Or, try starting with store bought soups or stews.*

You can mix in more vegetables, or make condensed soups with milk instead of water.

- *Add liquid to the blender.*

Liquids to try are milk, broth, fruit or vegetable juice, liquid nutritional supplements (such as Ensure[®], Boost[®], or the store brand equivalent), Lactaid[®] milk, kefir, etc. Choose whichever liquid will taste best (e.g., use chicken broth with chicken, milk with sweets).

- *Puree the food.*

You may need to test the amounts of food and liquid a few times to get the right consistency. Foods should be smooth and completely free of chunks. The thickness is up to you.

- *Always clean equipment well.*

Any food left in the blender or food processor for more than 1-2 hours could cause food-borne illness ("food poisoning").

Recommended Foods for a Pureed Diet

These are just a few examples – be creative and try whatever you like!

Food Group	Suggested Foods	Tips
Meat, Fish, Poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pureed cooked meat, fish, poultry • Pureed casseroles or meat salads (chicken, ham, tuna) • Pureed stews 	Use broth or gravy to puree meats.
Milk, Cheese, Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrambled eggs or egg substitute, pureed egg salad • Yogurt (no chunks, seeds, or nuts) • Kefir and other drinkable yogurts • Pureed macaroni & cheese • Cottage cheese • Pureed quiche 	Use milk or cream to puree macaroni & cheese, eggs, or casseroles.
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pureed fruit • Applesauce (no chunks), apple butter • Smooth, canned pie filling (no chunks) 	Use juice to puree fruits.
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth mashed potatoes • Pureed cooked vegetables • Pureed soups • Refried beans 	Use chicken, beef, or vegetable broth or gravy to puree vegetables.
Bread, Cereals, Rice, Pasta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pureed pasta, bread, rice, pancakes, French toast, biscuits • Pureed cookies, muffins, breads, cakes (no nuts or seeds) • Cooked cereals (no nuts or seeds): oatmeal, cream of rice or wheat, grits 	<p>Use gravy, broth, or sauce to puree rice or pasta.</p> <p>Use milk or cream to puree peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, muffins, or other baked goods. See slurry section above for breads, muffins, etc.</p>
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milkshakes • Pudding, custard • Crème Brulee, mousse • Frozen yogurt 	Enjoy these as they are, as long as they have no nuts, seeds, or chunks.