

Tips to Help Manage Your Dysphagia



Dysphagia refers to difficulty swallowing. It is a medical and feeding issue which is more common in older adults. Without treatment, it can lead to malnutrition, weight loss, aspiration pneumonia, dehydration and decreased quality of life. There is also the risk of choking if food blocks the airway.

What causes dysphagia?

- Stroke
- Head or neck injury
- Cerebral palsy
- Forms of dementia
- Dental issues

How can you manage dysphagia?

One of the best ways is to modify the texture of foods (chopped, minced, pureed) and thicken fluids. This helps reduce the risk of choking or having material enter the airway. A healthcare team can provide a treatment plan that is right for you.

What are soft or moist and minced foods?

Soft, moist and minced foods may also be called mechanically soft. Foods in this category are easier to chew, they include:

- Cooked fruits and vegetables
- Moist ground meat
- Soft bread
- Creamy cereal products

Foods that “dissolve” in the mouth like graham crackers are also a good choice. If minced and moist textured foods are part of your plan, you will need to mash soft foods or cut them into tiny pieces.

What are pureed foods?

Pureed foods are smooth with a pudding-like texture. They are easy to swallow and do not require chewing.

What are the different textures of fluid?

Some people with dysphagia may need liquids to be thickened. Below are terms and definitions that describe the consistency of liquids.

- **Nectar-like or mildly thick fluids.** These run fast through the prongs of a fork and flow slowly off a spoon. You may be able to drink these from a cup.
- **Honey-like or moderately thick.** These fluids slowly drip through the prongs of a fork. You may be able to drink these from a cup, but they may not go through a straw.
- **Pudding-like or extremely thick fluids.** These do not pour or go through the prongs of a fork. They are too thick to drink from a cup. It is best to spoon them into your mouth.

Pre-thickened liquids and commercial thickeners are also available. Follow the instructions when using these products to get the thickness you need.

Helpful Tips:

- ✓ Sit upright
- ✓ Chew slowly and completely
- ✓ Use assistive devices
- ✓ Cut food into small pieces
- ✓ Have someone around to assist during mealtime
- ✓ Stay hydrated and well nourished
- ✓ Try oral motor exercises
- ✓ Maintain good oral hygiene

Which Mom's Meals® are best if I have dysphagia?

Any of the meals on our pureed menu are helpful in managing dysphagia. These meals are created following the International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI) Framework guidelines. Although we do not offer a soft or minced and moist menu, many foods on our menus may be suitable. To find the best meals to meet your needs, visit our website or call our customer care team.

For more information about nutrition visit:

www.eatright.org



At Mom's Meals, our menus are designed to support the nutritional needs of many common chronic conditions. For additional questions about how to manage your dysphagia with Mom's Meals, visit our website at momsmeals.com.

Sources:

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/dysphagia>
<https://iddsi.org/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7059648/>
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-you-can-eat-on-a-pureed-diet-2507159>
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