

## DDD PREVENTION BULLETIN | DIET TEXTURES



**Diet Textures:** When individuals have issues with swallowing or controlling the food in their mouth, they may require a texture-modified diet to reduce the risk of choking or aspiration (Food blocking the airway). DDD acknowledges, advocates, and educates on the following Diet Textures: Regular, Chopped, Ground, and Puree for DDD-licensed settings in the community.

### Diet Textures



**Regular Diet:** A diet that does not require any modifications in size.

A person on a regular diet should not have difficulty moving food in their mouth.



**Chopped Diet:** A modified diet with food prepared approximately 1/2 inch x 1/2 inch or smaller.

A person on a chopped diet may have decreased chewing abilities. This decrease can be due to neuromuscular problems or a habit such as being easily distracted while eating.



**Ground:** A modified diet with moist food prepared approximately 1/4 inch x 1/4 inch or smaller.

A person on a ground diet may have difficulty chewing or moving food in their mouth. Ground diet-prepared food should have texture and not be completely smooth. When using a food processor, be careful not to over-blend. Most cooked food can be mashed with a fork or potato masher to achieve the correct texture.



**Puree:** A modified diet with no measurable size that is creamy and smooth.

A person on a puree diet may not be able to chew or may have significant digestive issues. Pureed food should not have any texture or lumps. When using a blender or a food processor to get the food smooth, it is necessary to add liquids achieve the correct consistency. If you use water or milk, the food will be bland and tasteless. Broth and seasoning are recommended to ensure the food is flavorful.

## Things to Know

- **Chewing & Swallowing:** Anything we eat or drink must go from the lips, through the mouth, to the throat, and finally to the esophagus. Mouth muscles form a ball for swallowing (food, drink, or saliva).
- **Dysphagia (Swallowing Disorder):** There are many muscles in the mouth and throat to move the food along. If the muscles are not working FAST enough, STRONGLY enough, or with enough COORDINATION, the person is likely to have difficulty chewing and/or swallowing.
- **Modified Food Texture (Modified Diet):** For individuals with Dysphagia, changing the texture of the food makes it easier for the muscles of the mouth and throat.
- **Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):** a professional that evaluates a person's communication or swallowing abilities, diagnoses underlying problems, develops a personal treatment plan, provides therapy, and maintains records to track a person's progress.
- **Dietitian:** an expert in identifying and treating disease-related malnutrition and in conducting medical nutrition therapy.
- **Nutritionist:** a specialist that generally provides advice to individuals on how to eat healthily, lose weight, and reduce fatigue and tiredness through changing what they eat.
- **Swallowing Study/Evaluation:**
  - ❖ **Modified Barium Swallow Study (MBSS)** is a fluoroscopic procedure (a special x-ray), designed to take pictures and videos of a person's mouth and throat while they are swallowing various foods and liquids. During the test, the individual tries various food textures and liquid consistencies, mixed with barium, that allow the radiologist and speech-language pathologist to see the internal structures of how well the mouth, throat and other swallowing mechanisms are working. An MBSS can also determine whether food or liquid is entering your lungs. The procedure allows the SLP to plan what diet textures and liquid consistencies are safer and easier to swallow, and identify positions and ways that help the individual swallow safely.
  - ❖ **Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)** is a procedure used to assess swallowing capability. A flexible endoscope with a light is connected to video recording equipment. The scope passes through the nose to view the pharynx and larynx during the swallowing process. Any dysphagia, up to the level of the vocal folds, can be identified with FEES, which is sensitive enough to detect trace aspiration and aspiration of secretions. If swallow dysfunction is identified, the SLP can recommend diet modifications based on the results.



*If you have any questions regarding this material or would like to schedule a training, please contact The DDD Resource Team at [ddd.resourceteam@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:ddd.resourceteam@dhs.nj.gov).*