

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, Puree, and Ground.

Diet Textures



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

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.

A person on a chopped diet may have decreased chewing abilities. This decrease can be due to neuromuscular problems or a habit such as not paying attention when they eat.



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

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. Most cooked food can be mashed with a fork or potato masher to achieve the correct texture. A food processor will usually over-blend resulting in the wrong texture for a ground diet.



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 has significant digestive issues. Pureed food should not have any lumps. A blender usually works much better than a food processor to get the food smooth. It is necessary to add liquids when blending foods to 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 (Eating 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.
- **Dietician:** 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 Study (MBS)** 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 how well someone swallows. The FEES test has two basic parts. During the first phase, the structure of the pharynx and larynx may be observed. The SLP will watch how well the individual swallows saliva prior to any food. The second part of the FEES test is when food is introduced. Here, swallowing will be assessed with different textures and sizes of food and liquid. An SLP may use food color to dye the food and liquid so it is easier to view on screen. The individual may need to adopt different positions or try different types of foods as the SLP evaluates the throat and swallowing function.

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.