National Guidelines for Meal Consistencies for Patients with Dysphagia

Karl O’ Brien Nutricia Medical
What is Dysphagia?

“Dysphagia is a medical term used to describe a swallowing disorder, characterised by difficulty in oral preparation for the swallow, or in moving material from the mouth to the stomach”
Management of Dysphagia

**Dietary Adjustments**
Changing specific parameters in the patient’s diet. Commonly consistency and food choices.

**Key Aims**
Modifying the **consistency** alters the rate at which food passes through the pharynx, to assist swallowing and reduce the risk of aspiration.
Guidelines produced by the
• Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT)
• Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)

Aim
• National consensus document regarding the terminology used for consistency
  • Food
  • Fluid

• Facilitate communication and reduce ambiguity
National Guidelines

The guidelines are intended for

• adult and paediatric populations

• in all settings including
  • acute care hospitals
  • rehabilitation hospitals/units
  • long stay hospitals/units, primary care
  • intellectual disability services and physical disability services
New Terminology for Consistencies- Fluids

*Fluid thickness grading scale for the clinical management of dysphagia*

- Unmodified
- Most Modified

| Unmodified – Regular Fluids | Grade 1 – Very Mildly Thick | Grade 2 – Mildly Thick | Grade 3 – Moderately Thick | Grade 4 – Extremely Thick |
Food Consistencies

Texture A
Texture B
Texture C
Texture D
Texture A – Soft Diet

Texture A - Soft

May be naturally soft or cooked/cut to alter its texture.
Texture A - Soft Diet

Food in this category may be naturally soft (e.g. ripe banana) or may be cooked or cut to alter its texture.

Soft foods can be chewed but not necessarily bitten.

Minimal cutting required – easily broken up with a fork.

Food should be moist or served with a sauce or gravy to increase moisture content (NB sauces and gravies should be served at the required thickness level).
Texture A - Soft Diet: Recommended foods and foods to avoid (Examples Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Foods</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles</td>
<td>- Dry or crusty breads, breads with hard seeds or grains, hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meat with gristle, for example, meat with gristle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fried eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hard or fibrous legumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Casseroles with small pieces of tender meats (easily broken up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with the edge of a fork)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Well cooked legumes (the outer skin must be soft), for example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>baked beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Soft tofu, for example small pieces, crumbled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dry, tough, chewy or crispy meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meat with gristle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fried eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hard or fibrous legumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Casseroles with small pieces of tender meats (easily broken up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with the edge of a fork)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Well cooked legumes (the outer skin must be soft), for example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>baked beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Soft tofu, for example small pieces, crumbled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dry, tough, chewy or crispy meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meat with gristle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fried eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hard or fibrous legumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Casseroles with small pieces of tender meats (easily broken up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with the edge of a fork)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Well cooked legumes (the outer skin must be soft), for example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>baked beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Soft tofu, for example small pieces, crumbled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts and legumes

Allowed:
- Casseroles with small pieces of tender meats
- Moist fish (easily broken up with the edge of a fork)
- Eggs (all types except fried)
- Well cooked legumes (the outer skin must be soft), for example baked beans
- Soft tofu, for example small pieces, crumbled

Not recommended:
- Dry, tough, chewy or crispy meats
- Meat with gristle
- Fried eggs
- Hard or fibrous legumes
- Pizza
Texture B - Minced and Moist

Texture B - Minced and moist

Soft, moist and easily mashed with a fork.
Texture B - Minced and Moist

Food in this category is soft and moist and should easily form into a ball.

Use tongue rather than teeth to break the small lumps in this texture.

Soft and moist and should easily form into a ball.

Food should be easily mashed with a fork.

No hard or sharp lumps.
Texture C – Smooth Pureed

Texture C - Smooth pureed

Smooth, moist and lump free
Texture C - Smooth Pureed

Food in this category is smooth and lump free

Similar to the consistency of commercial pudding

May have a grainy quality but should not contain lumps

Moist and cohesive enough to hold its shape on a spoon
  — when placed side by side on a plate these consistencies would maintain their position without ‘bleeding’ into one another

Food could be moulded, layered or piped

Nutilis Powder allows food to maintain their consistency
Texture D - Liquidised

Smooth, pouring, uniform consistency
Texture D - Liquidised

Smooth and lump free

Has been pureed or sieved to remove any particles

Do not hold their shape, they merge into one another when placed side by side on a plate and as result are generally served in a bowl

Cannot be eaten with a fork

Can be taken through a wide bore straw
Avoid High Risk Foods

- **Stringy, fibrous texture** e.g. celery, lettuce, cabbage
- **Mixed consistency foods** e.g. cereals which do not blend with milk such as muesli, soup with lumps
- **Crunchy foods** e.g. toast, chips, flaky pastry, dry biscuits, crisps
- **Crumbly items** e.g. bread crusts, pie crusts, crumble
- **Hard foods** e.g. boiled and chewy sweets and toffee
- **Husks** e.g. sweetcorn and granary bread
- **Chocolate & Jelly and Ice -Cream**
Using Nutilis Powder for Meals

Texture C - Smooth pureed

Smooth, moist and lump free