

West Sussex County Catering Services

Guidelines for the provision of medically prescribed
special diets for Special Schools in West Sussex

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Guidelines for the provision of medically prescribed special diets West Sussex County Council

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Forward

West Sussex County Catering Advisory Team is responsible for the catering service within Special Schools throughout the County. The Cooks and Catering Assistants are directly employed by WSCC and managed by our team of Catering Monitoring Officers and supported by Senior Catering Management. The team are highly qualified, skilled and experienced within the catering industry both in local authority catering and the private sector.

We are responsible for producing nutritionally balanced, healthy lunches. It is important that whilst at school parents can rest safe in the knowledge that their child is being fed an interesting, safe and tasty meal, with choice, that will fuel them during the school day in order that they can achieve to the best of their abilities.

We work alongside schools Senior Leadership Teams and our school cooks to ensure that our offer is tailored to gain the best possible take up of school meals. All of our menus are endorsed by School Food Trust to meet and exceed current Government School Food Standards for schools. We have a fully Registered Nutritionist Dietitian and our menus are fully compliant with the Government School Food Standards. We supply a full Allergen Matrix to support our menu choices all of our suppliers are strictly controlled and audited to ensure a safe and quality supply chain.

Stakeholders ranging from Headteachers to Parents, Children and Cooks are consulted during the planning of new menus. An emphasis on student's favourite choices and feedback is very much taken in to account. We understand that to have nutritionally compliant menus that the young people will not eat is in no one's interests. Currently we change our menu twice a year and it is on a 3 week cycle that aims to keep the choices fresh and exciting.

Our aim is to encourage pupils to choose healthy, well balanced meals, and support the enjoyable social experience of lunch times.

John Figgins
County Catering Service Manager
West Sussex County Council Catering Service

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the provision of a special diet for a child.

The County Catering Service recognises the importance of a healthy balanced diet for all children and the need for the provision of special diets when the diet has been prescribed/endorsed by a medical professional i.e. School Nurse, Dietitian, GP, Paediatrician, Speech Therapist.

Schools are an ideal environment to encourage children to have a balanced diet and introduce more variety and opportunities to try different foods.

This guidance is primarily designed to safeguard the child receiving the special diet through the accurate production and provision of the appropriate food. To ensure effective risk management and the ultimate safety of the child to ensure no adverse effects on the child's health are encountered.

The guidance will ensure that parents/carers, and all school staff, are clear about the process and procedures. To ensure the school catering team are given clear guidance on the special diet so that they can produce a safe and suitable meal for the child.

Special Diets

For the purpose of these guidelines, a special diet is a medically prescribed diet e.g. gluten free, diabetic, milk free, egg free, weight reduction, high protein, high energy.

It does not refer to specific dietary needs due to religion or personal choice or belief as these are accommodated within our standard menus.

Severe Food Allergies

Some food allergies can be serious or even fatal. Nut allergy is the best known, but it can apply to any food in a particular case. Some children may bring in a packed meal that contains a known allergen to another child. In schools where there is a child with a severe food allergy, it is unlikely that it is practical to make the school an 'allergy free zone'. This would give false reassurance that cannot be guaranteed in practice. For example, schools cannot guarantee that every cereal bar in every packed lunch is nut free. The child with a severe allergy must be taught by parents and the school staff not to swap food with other children. The school should discuss with parents and carers appropriate ways of reducing the chances of exposure to the offending substance.

The Food Information Regulation, which came into force in December 2014 .There are 14 major allergens which need to be mentioned (either on a label or through provided information such as menus) when they are used as ingredients in a food. Many of these foods can provoke adverse reactions but the most common triggers of reactions involving the immune system are:

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (almond, brazil, cashew, hazel, pecan, walnut, pistachio and macadamia nuts)
- Eggs
- Cows' milk
- Fish
- Crustaceans
- Molluscs
- Soya
- Sesame Seeds
- Celery
- Lupin
- Mustard
- Sulphur Dioxide (sometimes known as sulphites)
- Cereals containing gluten (including wheat, rye, barley)

Gluten-free diets

Some people (around one person in 100) are unable to digest a protein found in cereals (e.g. wheat) called gluten. In sensitive people, gluten has a harmful effect on the digestive system which means that food cannot be absorbed normally. This condition (known as coeliac disease) can cause bowel symptoms and weight loss. Some children with Autistic spectrum disorder may also be following a gluten free diet.

Gluten free diets are provided, and all reasonable care is taken to ensure minimum contamination. However, WSCC cannot guarantee that the product is totally gluten free as manufacturers have put a disclaimer to that effect on a wide range of their products. If parents wish, they can provide additional gluten free items for the child to consume at lunch time in consultation with the catering team. The UK Coeliac Society compiles and publishes a list of gluten-free foods based on information provided by food manufacturers.

Additives

The following additives have been linked to causing allergic reactions in some cases:

Sulphites

Sulphur dioxide (E220) and other sulphites (E221, E222, E223, E224, E226, E227 and E228) are used as preservatives in a wide range of foods, notably soft drinks, sausages, burgers and dried fruit and vegetables.

Benzoates

Benzoic acid (E210) and other benzoates (E211, E212, E213, E214, E215, E218 and E219) are used as food preservatives to prevent yeasts and moulds from growing, most commonly in soft drinks. They occur naturally in fruit and honey.

Tartrazine

Tartrazine (E102) is a yellow colour used in a range of foods, including soft drinks, sweets and sauces.

Other artificial colours, may be linked to hyperactivity include:

- sunset yellow (E110)
- quinoline yellow (E104)
- carmoisine (E122)
- allura red (E129)
- tartrazine (E102)
- ponceau 4R (E124)

WSCC continue to work with our suppliers to ensure we buy products that contain none or absolute minimum levels of these additives

Texture Modified meals and additional support needs

Children requiring texture modification

Many children find that certain textures are difficult to manage. This may be because they have poor oral motor skills and find chewing and/or swallowing certain foods difficult. Learning to chew and swallow a range of textures is important for normal development of speech. Therefore, children who could manage a diet with more mixed, complex and challenging textures should be given such foods under guidance.

Some children may have chewing and swallowing difficulties or require additional support with eating and drinking.

Foods are adapted by the Catering Team to ensure they are of an appropriate texture and consistency. The following descriptors have been developed by the National Patient Safety Association, Royal College Speech Language Therapy and British Dietetic Association (March 2012). These descriptors detail the types and textures of foods needed by individuals who have oro-pharyngeal dysphagia (swallowing difficulties) and who are at risk of choking or aspiration (food or liquid going into their airway). The descriptors provide standard terminology to be used by all health and care professionals and food providers when communicating an individual's requirements for a texture modified diet. These descriptors have been adopted and trained in to WSCC Catering Teams. The food textures are:

B = Thin Purée Dysphagia Diet

C = Thick Purée Dysphagia Diet

D = Pre-mashed Dysphagia Diet

E = Fork Mashable Dysphagia Diet

Further information see Appendix A – Page 14

WSCC will cater for the majority of special diets after discussion with parents/health professionals. Consideration will be given to carefully planning menus in advance so that the food offered will be suitable for individual dietary needs and to discuss ways of making meals more appetising and varied. As far as possible, food provided for special diets will follow the School Food Standards for school meals. We will ensure a variety is available and an opportunity for the child to try different tastes and suitable textures. We are aware that some children with autism have particular issues relating to food and will only eat a limited variety. In this instance, working in partnership with parents and the school team, every effort will be made to encourage autistic children to eat a healthy, balanced meal at lunchtime.

Guidance notes for Lifestyle Choice Diet

Vegetarians

Strictly speaking, vegetarians do not eat meat or fish but the term 'vegetarianism' can mean a variety of different things and the types of foods restricted can vary enormously. Our menus have a vegetarian choice daily aimed at accommodating as many vegetarians as possible within the standard lunch time service.

Diets for cultural and religious reasons

Many individuals have various cultural and religious beliefs which influence the food they eat. WSCC offers a varied menu which can accommodate most dietary restrictions. Currently Halal meat is not offered, but there is always a choice of a hot vegetarian dish, jacket potatoes with a choice of fillings and a salad bar in a number of schools dependent on demand.

Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Children with ASD are particularly likely to be highly selective in their food choices. This is often symptomatic of ASD. The child is not simply being fussy or awkward. There is a need for many ASD children to look for patterns, structure and repetition in many aspects of their lives including meal times. Also many children with ASD are extremely susceptible to 'sensory overload' from the noise, smells and visual stimulation of the dining room, and the texture, taste and smell of the food. Meal times therefore can be highly stressful. For some children with ASD, it is unrealistic to expect them to accept 'healthy and nutritionally balanced' school menus immediately. Broadening the diet of such children is a difficult, painstaking task that requires persistence, patience and a measured approach. Caterers with the support of learning staff, parents and pupils need to work together to develop a pragmatic and phased approach to dietary improvement.

Children with communication difficulties

Some children have a difficulty reading but respond well to visual images. Others can read, but find it difficult to establish a clear mental image of what that food will actually be like. Therefore appropriate visual images of food choices should be available to help children decide what they want to eat. We would ask that schools help support us in this work.

Obesity

Children who are obese or overweight do not need a 'special diet' whilst at school. The changes recently implemented as a result of improved Government School Food Standard have increased the number of appropriate choices and reduced the number of inappropriate choices for all children. This will continue to be of even greater benefit for overweight and obese children. There will continue to be more choice of nutrient rich foods, and less foods that are high in fat and added sugars.

Diabetes

Diabetes UK recommends that children with diabetes should follow similar healthy eating guidelines to the rest of the population. Balancing carbohydrate and insulin regime is vital. The only adaptation within the school meals is to some deserts.

Our Menus

Outlined below are some example menus. Our menus are fully nutritionally analysed and compliant with current Government School Food Plan for schools.

Further information can be obtained from the County Catering department.

West Sussex County Council Special **Sample School Menu**

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Main Course	Quorn Hotdog	Gammon Roast	Chicken Tikka Masala	Lamb Tagine	Macaroni Cheese
Vegetarian	Mediterranean Tart	Lentil Roast	Bean Wrap	Sweet & Sour Quorn	Crunchy Salmon Pie
Vegetables	Potatoes Wedges Country Mixed Vegetables	Roast Potatoes Spring Greens Swede	Rice or New Potatoes Sweetcorn Broccoli	Rice or Cous Cous Roasted Vegetables	Mashed Potatoes or Pasta Carrots Peas
Dessert	Strawberry Cheesecake	Peach, Pineapple & Cranberry Sponge with Custard	Apricot Cookie & Fruit Smoothie	Peaches & Strawberry Whip with Fruit Compote	Chelsea Bun & Milkshake
Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Main Course	Pizza	Beef Bolognese	Chicken Sausages	Roast Turkey	Chickpea Burger
Vegetarian	Quorn & Leek Pie	Vegetable Frittata	Italian Bean Bake	Quorn Roast	Battered Fish
Vegetables	Wedges Country Mixed Vegetables	Pasta or New Potato Carrots & Mange Tout	Mashed Potatoes Pasta Cabbage & Carrots	Roast Potatoes Green Beans & Sweede	Herby Diced Potato Sweetcorn & Broccoli
Dessert	Ginger Cookie & Fruit Smoothie	Raspberry Sponge & Custard	Lemon Iced Bun & Milkshake	Chocolate Cracknel & Fruit Slices	Apple Pie & Cream
Week 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Main Course	Cheese Slice	Spanish Chicken	Roast Pork	Beef Arrabiata	Fish Fingers
Vegetarian	Quorn Sausages & Onion Gravy	Quorn Curry	Chickpea Roast	Beanie Cheese Skins	Vegetable & Lentil Gratin
Vegetables	New Potatoes Carrots & Peas	Rice Cauliflower & Sweetcorn	Roast Potatoes Swede & Green Beans	Pasta or New Potatoes Country Mixed vegetables	Chips Baked Beans & Broccoli
Dessert	Warm Waffles with Caramelised Peaches & Ice-cream	Lemon Drizzle Cake & Lemon Custard	Raspberry Flapjack and Fruit Slices	Chocolate Brownie & Milkshake	Fruit Crumble & Cream

Available daily – Homemade bread, water, salad bar and a selection of fresh fruit & fruit yoghurt.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Staff	Actions	Timeline
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be first point of contact for special diet requests from parents, use detailed form supplied by WSCC Catering Department. • Make procedure for requesting special diets clear to parents in school communication and then annually and for new starters. • Ensure appropriate protocol is in place in the event of an emergency, e.g. use of epipen. • Ensure completed special diet request form is photocopied for school catering service. • Arrange for parents to discuss practicalities of special diet with cook supervisor. • Ensure catering staff are given photograph of children to be displayed with the diet information in the kitchen/serving area (away from view of children). • Inform key teaching/support staff re special diet requirements so choices at lunch time are supported and encouraged. • Inform school staff involved in supporting/providing food that is school related other than lunch (e.g. cooking/tasting classes, social events, treats, prizes, school trips). • Seek medical supervision for the special diet (Dietitian, School Nurse or GP) if appropriate. 	
Teacher/Learning Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to “model” healthy eating habits for selective eaters. • Understand and support the medical request for special diet. • Understand difference between medically prescribed diet and lifestyle diet. 	
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of own special dietary needs (appropriate to level of development). • Not swap food with other children (if food allergy or intolerance). 	
Parent/Carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the school in the first instance for a special diet. • Complete the special diet request form and return to school. • Keep headteacher informed of changes to the special diet. • Make plans with the headteacher for school related food provision other than school lunch. (e.g. social events, school trips). • Only provide “special” ingredients of low risk with name and best before/use by date clearly marked to catering staff. eg Gluten free bread etc. In a clear sealable container. 	

School Cook Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss menu with parent/carer to ensure suitability • Ensure that parents are aware which “special” ingredients can be provided by the catering service • Keep written updated record of all children with special dietary needs. • Provide an up to date summary of special diet on a termly basis for Senior Catering Officer. • Ensure all catering staff are aware of how to provide the special diet. • Ensure that any kitchen relief staff are fully informed about special diets in the school • Cook supervisor will not amend diet without updated information from parents. • Ensure confidentiality at all times. 	
County Catering Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide necessary documentation. • Organise any necessary training for school catering staff. • Ensure suitable “free from” products can be ordered by schools only where or if possible. • Obtain clear up to date information from suppliers about which foods are ‘free from’ which substance. • Engage with relevant professional agencies in line with current guidance. • Review current supplies to minimise the unnecessary use of ingredients that large numbers of children need to avoid (e.g. food additives, milk products and gluten). 	
County Dietitian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise catering team on appropriateness of special diet. • Support, advise and train catering team on provision of special diets. • Ensure menus are appropriate to meet current nutritional standards. • Keep up to date with current legislation. 	

SPECIAL DIET PROVISION- REQUEST FORM

Important Notes and Guidance

West Sussex County Council are committed to supporting the provision of a balanced school meal with special dietary requirements whenever possible. This referral form is essential to provide West Sussex County Catering Services the information to support the process of ensuring that a safe, special diet is planned for pupils who have a medical condition or an allergy / intolerance. **This form must be completed by the Parent/Carer and signed by the parent or carer of pupil requesting the school meal. Please return the completed form to the school office.**

School and pupil details			
School attended by pupil:			
Pupil name:		Date of birth/ class/ year:	
Parent /Carer name:		Contact phone numbers:	
		Can we contact you by telephone - YES NO	
Details of special diet – To be completed by parent/carers			
State the food allergy/intolerance or medical condition and year the condition first diagnosed.			
Is there a care plan in place? Or any medical evidence e.g. menu plan from GP/Dietitian/Speech and Language Therapist		YES -please send copy to school NO- If no, The pupil must bring a packed lunch from home until further information is obtained and/or meeting with parents and catering team.	
Special Diet required-please tick			
No Gluten		Weight Reducing	
No Milk		High Calorie	
No Eggs			
No Soya		Other	
No Peanuts			
No Nuts			
No Lupin			
No Celery			
No Sulphur Dioxide			
No Fish			
No Crustaceans			
No Molluscs			
No Sesame seeds			
No Mustard			
Modified Consistency Textures:			
B – Thin Puree	<input type="checkbox"/>	C – Thick Puree	<input type="checkbox"/>
		D – Pre-mashed	<input type="checkbox"/>
		E – Fork Mashable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has this been prescribed/ assessed by the Speech and Language Therapist?			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Please provide specific details).....			
If the pupil has a diagnosed food allergy/intolerance please describe the severity of the allergy			
Please tell us what would happen if an unsuitable food is consumed by accident (please tick the relevant box)			
Life threatening	<input type="checkbox"/>	Severe impact	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Mild to moderate reaction	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown but not life threatening	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signatories. Once the special diet request form has been received, if required the catering team will contact the parent for any clarification. At any time the dietary requirement changes the parent/carers is responsible for informing the school staff as soon as possible.			
Parent/Carer signature:		Date:	
Catering team signature:		Date:	
School contact signature:		Date:	
Starting date of special diet:		Confirmed by	
		Date:	

Education & Skills
Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education
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(01243) 777140 (Fax)
Catering.advisory.service@westsussex.gov.uk

County Hall
West Street
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RF
0845 075 1007



www.westsussex.gov.uk

Date

Dear Parent/ Carer

West Sussex County Council Catering Service has devised a procedure to ensure the safe guarding of our customers with regards to special diet requirements.

This procedure has been implemented to provide all the necessary information to the correct persons involved in providing the correct food provision for your child.

If your child has a medical condition that requires a special diet, please complete the attached form with all the necessary information required and supporting **medical evidence** and return it to the school office.

Once the school has received the completed form it will be passed to the catering service. If additional information is required then someone from West Sussex County Council Catering Team will contact you to discuss further. A meal cannot be provided until all the information that the catering service requires has been collated. This is for the safety of your child.

All information will be treated confidentially and will only be shared with school staff.

The school Catering Supervisor will use the information on the form to ensure the correct food is provided. If any changes are required to your child's diet you will need to contact the school and complete a new form.

Thank you for your help and support.

Regards

Helen Turner

Senior Catering Officer

Appendix A

Dysphagia Diet Food Texture Descriptors

B – Thin Puree Dysphagia Diet

General description:

- Food has been puréed or has purée texture. It does not require chewing.
- It is a *thin* purée (*please see note below).
- It is smooth throughout with no ‘bits’ (no lumps, fibres, bits of shell/skins, bits of husk, particles of gristle/bone etc). It may need to be sieved to achieve this.
- It may have a *fine* ‘textured’ quality as long as the bolus remains cohesive in the mouth.
- It is moist.
- Any fluid in or on the food is as thick as the purée itself.
- There are no loose fluids that have separated off.
- The texture is not sticky in the mouth.
- No garnish.

Check before serving/eating:

- No hard pieces, crust or skin have formed during cooking/heating/standing.
- It has not thinned out and any liquid within the food has not separated off.

Note: No ice cream or jelly unless advised as suitable by speech & language therapist on an individual basis.

***Note – definition of ‘thin’ purée**

- Does not hold its shape on a plate or when scooped.
- Cannot be eaten with a fork because it slowly drops through the prongs.
- The prongs of a fork do not make a clear pattern on the surface.
- It can not be piped, layered or moulded.
- Can be poured.
- ‘Spreads out’ if spilled. A light, disposable plastic teaspoon must be able to stand upright when the head is fully covered.
- If it does not do this, the texture is too thin.

C – Thick Puree Dysphagia Diet

General description:

- Food has been puréed or has purée texture. It does not require chewing.
- It is a *thick* purée (*please see note below).
- It is smooth throughout with no 'bits' (*no lumps, fibres, bits of shell/skin, bits of husk, particles of gristle/bone etc.*) It may need to be sieved to achieve this.
- It may have a fine 'textured' quality as long as the bolus remains cohesive in the mouth.
- It is moist.
- Any fluid in or on the food is as thick as the purée itself.
- There are no loose fluids that have separated off.
- The texture is not sticky in the mouth.
- It is not rubbery.
- No garnish.

Check before serving/eating:

- No hard pieces, crust or skin have formed during cooking/heating/standing.
- Fluid/gravy/sauce/custard in or on the food has not thinned out or separated off.

*Note – definition of 'thick' purée

- Holds its shape on a plate or when scooped.
- Can be eaten with a fork because it does not drop through the prongs.
- The prongs of a fork make a clear pattern on the surface.
- It can be piped, layered or moulded.
- Cannot be poured. Does not 'spread out' if spilled.

Breakfasts and Desserts

- The texture of thick smooth porridge made from powder (purée porridge) with no loose fluids
- The texture of wheat-biscuit breakfast cereal fully softened with milk fully absorbed
- The texture of thick blancmange or mousse with no 'bits'
- The texture of purée rice pudding
- There are no loose fluids
- There are no lumps
- Wheat-biscuit breakfast cereal has not fully softened
- Milk has not fully absorbed leaving loose fluid

Note: No ice cream or jelly unless advised as suitable by speech and language therapist on an individual basis.

D – Pre-Mashed Dysphagia Diet

General description:

- Food is soft, tender and moist. Needs very little chewing.
- It has been mashed up with a fork before serving (see overleaf for meat).
- It usually requires a very thick, smooth (non-pouring) sauce, gravy or custard (see next point).
- Any fluid, gravy, sauce or custard in or on the food is very thick (*please see note below).
- No mixed (thick-thin) textures. No loose fluid.
- No hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, dry, crispy, crunchy or crumbly bits.
- No pips, seeds, pith/inside skin. No skins or outer shells e.g. on peas, grapes. No husks.
- No skin, bone or gristle.
- No round or long-shaped foods e.g. sausages, grapes, sweets. No hard chunks e.g. pieces of apple.
- No sticky foods e.g. cheese chunks, marshmallows.
- No 'floppy' foods e.g. lettuce, cucumber, uncooked baby spinach leaves.
- No juicy food where juice separates off in the mouth to a mixed texture e.g. water melon.

Check before serving/eating:

- No hard pieces, crust or skin have formed during cooking/heating/standing.
- Fluid/gravy/sauce/custard in or on the food has not thinned out or separated off.

*Note – definition of 'very thick' fluid

- Any fluid, gravy, sauce or custard in or on food must be very thick.
- It holds its shape on a plate or when scooped, can not be poured and does not 'spread out' if spilled.
- Thinner single texture foods maybe suitable if a person is on thinner fluids –SLT to advise on an individual basis.

SLT = Speech and Language Therapists

Texture D products must be mashed by the manufacturer /originator prior to 1. heating for service i.e. it must be in a pre-mashed state when it reaches the client.

In addition to the general description above:

- **Meat**
Must be finely minced – pieces approximately 2mms. No hard bits of mince.
Serve in a *very thick*, smooth (non-pouring) sauce or gravy.
If it cannot be finely minced it should be puréed (to texture C)
- **Fish**
Serve finely mashed and in a *very thick*, smooth (non-pouring) sauce or gravy.
- **Fruit**
Serve mashed. Drain away any juice that has separated.
- **Casserole/stew/curry**
Must be *very thick*.
Can contain meat, fish or vegetable if prepared as above and overleaf and are fully mixed in.
- **Bread**
No bread unless assessed as suitable by SLT on an individual basis.
- **Cereal**
The texture of *very thick* smooth porridge with no lumps.
Or the texture of fully softened wheat-biscuit breakfast cereal with milk fully absorbed.
Any milk/fluid must not separate off (*i.e. no loose fluid/no mixed (thick – thin) textures*).
Overall texture must be *very thick* (Because this is a single texture food it could be served thinner if a person is on thinner fluids – SLT to advise).
- **Desserts**
The texture of *very thick*, smooth yogurt (no bits) or stewed apple in *very thick* custard.
Or the texture of soft sponge cake with smooth filling, fully softened by mashing and mixing in with *very thick*, smooth (non-pouring) custard.
Overall texture must be *very thick*. (If the texture of the dessert is single it could be served thinner if a person is on thinner fluids – SLT to advise).
No ice-cream or jelly if a person requires thickened fluids (because these can change to normal fluid thickness in the mouth).

E – Fork Mashable Dysphagia Diet

General description:

- Food is soft, tender and moist but needs some chewing.
- It can be mashed with a fork.
- It usually requires a thick, smooth sauce, gravy or custard (see next point).
- Any fluid, gravy, sauce or custard in or on the food is thick (*please see note below).
- No mixed (thick-thin) textures. No thin loose fluid.
- No hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, dry, crispy, crunchy or crumbly bits.
- No pips, seeds, pith/inside skin. No skins or outer shells e.g. on peas, grapes. No husks.
- No skin, bone or gristle.
- No round or long-shaped foods e.g. sausages, grapes, sweets. No hard chunks e.g. pieces of apple.
- No sticky foods e.g. cheese chunks, marshmallows.
- No 'floppy' foods e.g. lettuce, cucumber, uncooked baby spinach leaves.
- No juicy food where juice separates off in the mouth to a mixed texture e.g. water melon.

Check before serving/eating:

- No hard pieces, crust or skin have formed during cooking/heating/standing.
- Fluid/gravy/sauce/custard in or on the food has not thinned out or separated off.

***Note – definition of 'thick' fluid**

- Any fluid, gravy, sauce or custard in or on food must be *thick* – a light disposable plastic teaspoon would stand upright if the head were fully but just covered.
- Those on Texture E must therefore be able to cope with thinner fluids – stage 2.
- Thinner *single* texture foods maybe suitable if a person is on thinner fluids –SLT to advise on an individual basis.

SLT = Speech and Language Therapist

Texture E products must be in a consistency that allows them to be mashed easily using a fork at point of service/consumption

In addition to the general description above:

- **Meat**

Pieces of soft tender meat must be served no bigger than 15mms.

Or serve meat finely minced. No hard bits of mince. Serve in a *thick* smooth sauce or gravy.

For children

Specific guidance on the size of the meat particles based on the child's swallowing skills, their age and their development level will be provided by a speech and language therapist following individual assessment.

- **Fish**

Soft enough to break up into small pieces with a fork.

Serve in *thick* smooth sauce or gravy.

- **Fruit**

Juicy fruit should be mashed – drain away any juice that has separated.

- **Casserole/stew/curry**

Must be *thick*.

Can contain meat, fish or vegetables if prepared as above and overleaf and fully mixed in.

- **Bread**

No bread unless assessed as suitable by SLT on an individual basis.

- **Cereal**

The texture of thick smooth porridge with no lumps.

Or the texture of fully softened wheat-biscuit breakfast cereal with milk fully absorbed.

Any milk/fluid must not separate off (i.e. no thin loose fluid/no mixed (thick- thin) textures.

Overall texture must be *thick* (Because this is a single texture food it could be served thinner if a person is on thinner fluids – SLT to advise).

- **Desserts**

The texture of *thick* smooth yogurt (no bits) or stewed apple in thick custard.

Or texture of soft sponge cake with smooth filling, fully softened with thick smooth custard.

Overall texture must be *thick*. (If the texture of the dessert is single it could be served thinner if the person is on thinner fluids – SLT to advise).

No ice-cream or jelly if a person requires thickened fluids (because these can change to normal fluid thickness in the mouth).

Contacts

If you require any additional information or wish to discuss any of the points in this document please contact:

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