

PUREED FOOD



When people with dementia have difficulty swallowing, they are placed on a diet of pureed foods. Pureed foods are prepared by mashing, grinding or chopping food until a very fine, smooth texture is achieved. Pureed foods should be moist, cohesive, and spoon-thick without requiring any additional chewing or saliva. Almost any food can be pureed with the right ingredients and equipment. Pureed foods can taste great and do not need to be bland or boring.

CLEANLINESS

- Make sure your work area is clean.
- Wash your equipment with soap and hot water after each use.
- Keep eggs, meat and milk products in the fridge until you are ready to use them.
- Leftover foods such as soups and casseroles should be cooled quickly and kept in the fridge for up to 48 hours before pureeing.
- Once pureed, use food right away or store in the fridge for no more than 24 hours.
 - You can freeze these foods for up to two months.

HEADING 1

- Remove skin, seeds, bones and other tough parts of ingredients that may be hard to blend smoothly.
- Cook all ingredients until they are tender and easy to chop into small pieces that blend better.
- Process the food using a food processor until it is a fine texture.
- If necessary, add small amounts of liquid.
 - You should use hot liquids for cooked foods or cold liquids for cold foods.
 - Process the liquid and the food until it becomes a smooth, pudding-like texture.
- Season or flavor before scraping down the pureed food off of the sides of the food processor. Reprocess if necessary.
- Reheat the cooked, pureed foods or chill cold, thickened foods so that you can serve them at the proper temperature.

RIGHT TEXTURE

- Make sure that the pureed food is uniform in appearance as well as color. If the food is chunky or you see pieces, you need to use the food processor again.
- Use a spoon to test the puree. The composition needs to be similar to yogurt or pudding when you put it on the spoon. If it drips or runs, it's probably too thin; however, if you get a glob on the spoon, it may be too thick.
- Pureed food is too sticky if it sticks to the spoon. If you have this problem, you can add fat (such as butter, sour cream or gravy) to lessen the stickiness.
- If the pureed food is too runny, use baby rice cereal to thicken.
 - You can use pureed canned chickpeas or other canned plain beans into soups or vegetables to add thickness.
- If the pureed food is too dry, add liquids such as milk or gravy.
- Add some seasonings, such as sugar, salt, fat, or condiments to add flavor.

TIPS



- When making meals, puree each food item separately. Most people prefer to eat the veggies separate from the main dish. Blending the items together might save preparation time but will likely result in some strange and unappealing flavor combinations.
- Once you pureed the food, shape it like the correct food shape on the plate.
- Smoothies can be a great meal substitute for someone with a poor appetite. With so many recipe options, it's difficult to run out of ideas for great tasting, nutritious smoothies. The most important ingredient in a smoothie is the thickening agent. Use yogurt, pureed banana or frozen fruit as natural thickeners.

WHILE EATING

- Make them sit upright as they eat. They should continue to sit upright for at least thirty minutes after a meal. This will help move the food down to the stomach safely.
- Alternate bites of food with different tastes and textures. The goal is to keep them alert while eating, so serving them a variety of foods can help.
- Give them small bites at a time. Allow them plenty of time between bites to swallow.
- Make sure they are not pocketing their food inside their cheeks.
- Have a full glass of water (thickened) available during a meal. Have them drink sips in between bites to help move their food and keep their mouth moist.

INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS

- How to Cook Delicious Pureed Meal for Seniors
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUTOY-MQzUo>

THICKENED PRODUCTS

- Thick and Easy Brand
 - Found at Walmart
- Thick-It Ready to Use Food Thickener
 - Thick-It® Instant Food and Beverage Thickener produces the desired consistency quickly, easily and in a controlled manner without changing the taste or appearance of hot and cold foods and beverages
 - Cost of \$10.00
- Thick & Easy Purees frozen Meals
 - Designed to increase consumption and improve nutritional status.
 - Found at HealthyKin.com
- Puree Food Molds

EXPERIMENT

Preparing meals for a loved one on a pureed diet can be a bit challenging at first. Spending a little time experimenting with recipes created especially for those on a pureed diet is worth the investment. Putting a little thought into the presentation can also go a long way in maintaining appetite.

Dahl, Wendy J. (2011). Pureed foods for swallowing problems. University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension.