

Patient information

Soft and bite sized diet IDDSI Level 6

International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative

Speech and Language Therapy

V4 | SLT Department | Therapies | Date noted: 04/2026 | Review date: 04/2029



modern • integrated • outstanding

patient at heart • everyday excellence • creative collaboration

What are soft and bite sized foods (IDDSI Level 6)?

Soft and bite sized foods

- Can be eaten with a fork or a spoon
- Do not require a knife to cut the food but may be helpful to load the fork or spoon. Pressure from the fork held on its side can be used to cut/break this texture
- Can be mashed or broken down with a fork or spoon
- Require chewing before swallowing
- Are soft, tender and moist throughout, but with no separate thin liquids
- Require pieces to be cut no bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm

What does this mean for me?

A speech and language therapist has recommended your diet to be modified to **Soft and Bited Sized** (IDDSI Level 6). By modifying food to this consistency, eating may become easier and safer for you, reducing the risk of aspiration (food/fluid entering the airway), which can occur when a person has dysphagia (swallowing difficulties).

Hints and tips

If you are unsure whether your food is the correct consistency for a **Soft and Bited Sized** diet, you can test it by using a fork:

When firm pressure is applied to food and released it will squash and change shape (it will not return to its original shape).



V4 | SLT Department | Therapies | Date noted: 04/2026 | Review date: 04/2029



modern • integrated • outstanding

patient at heart • everyday excellence • creative collaboration

How to prepare soft and bite sized food

Meat, Quorn and fish

- Soft enough to break into small pieces with a fork or spoon
- No bones
- Fish with no batter

Casserole, stew and curry

- Liquid portion must be thick or removed if you are on a thickened fluid consistency
- Contents must be cut no bigger than 1.5 cm x 1.5 cm, be moist, tender and a soft consistency with no hard lumps

Fruit

- Served mashed and excess juice drained
- Fibrous parts of fruit are not suitable e.g. orange peel & skin
- Fruit that has a high liquid content needs to be avoided, unless your therapist has assessed you with these

Vegetables, tofu and tempeh

- Steam/boil vegetables etc until they are soft and easily cut with the side of a fork
- Stir fried vegetables are often too firm and not soft or tender

Cereal

- Smooth with soft tender lumps
- Texture fully softened
- Drain away any excess liquid

Bread, burritos, wraps

- No regular, dry bread etc unless assessed as suitable by your therapist

Rice, couscous

- Not particulate/grainy, sticky or glutinous

Ideas for a soft and bite sized diet (IDDSI Level 6)

The websites below may provide some ideas and general guidance for puree meals/recipes

- **Eating with Dignity**
www.eatingwithdignity.org/recipes
- **Wiltshire Farm Foods**
www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com/ready-meals/level-6-soft-bite-sized-meals
- **Oak House Foods**
<https://www.oakhousefoods.co.uk/all-meals/soft-bitesized.html>



Unsafe swallow (dysphagia)

Symptoms of dysphagia may include:

- Coughing
- Wet/gurgly voice
- Pain on swallowing
- Eyes watering while eating/drinking
- Repeated chest infections
- Drooling/dribbling
- Difficulty breathing during or just after eating
- Unintentional weight loss
- Sticking sensation in throat or chest

Safe swallowing advice at meal times

- Ensure you are fully alert
- Sit upright while eating and drinking and for 30 minutes after
- Do not eat while lying down, it is very unsafe to swallow in this position
- Eat slowly, have small mouthfuls and take time
- Try not to talk while eating or drinking
- Check that there is no residue left in the mouth, either by using your tongue, using a mirror or asking someone
- Minimise distractions by turning off the radio, TV etc.

If you have any concerns regarding your swallowing, please contact your GP for a referral to the local speech and language therapy team.



Further information

Wiltshire Farm Foods: www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com

Oak House Foods: www.oakhousefoods.co.uk

International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative:
iddsi.org/framework/

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net or 01279 827211.

V4 | SLT Department | Therapies | Date noted: 04/2026 | Review date: 04/2029



modern • integrated • outstanding

patient at heart • everyday excellence • creative collaboration