



**UVA Digestive
Health Center**

Pureed Diet

A pureed diet may be necessary if you have trouble chewing or digesting solid food. "Pureed" means that all food has been ground, pressed and/or strained to a consistency of a soft, smooth, thick paste (similar to a thick pudding).

How to puree foods:

- **Choose foods that puree easily.** Avoid foods that are stringy (such as celery and onions), foods with nuts or seeds, and foods with tough skins. Any pits, bones, seeds, skins or other tough or inedible parts should be removed before pureeing the food.
- **Have the right equipment.** A food processor works best to puree foods. A good blender or hand mixer can be used if necessary.
- **Cook food until tender.**
- **Cut food into small pieces** to ensure that it is pureed evenly. Add to blender.
- **Add liquid to the blender.** Liquids can include milk, broth, fruit or vegetable juice, liquid nutritional supplements (such as Ensure[®], Boost[®], or the equivalent), Lactaid[®] milk, etc.
- **Puree the food.** You may need to experiment with the amounts of food and liquid to get the right consistency. Foods should be thick enough to pick up with a fork.
- **Always clean equipment well.** Any food left in the blender or food processor for > 1-2 hours could cause food-borne illness.

Helpful Hints for following a pureed diet:

- Try a variety of foods and recipes to increase the flavor of your diet. Salt, pepper, butter or margarine, salad dressings, smooth sauces, and other seasonings can be added to pureed foods to enhance flavor.
- For convenience, commercially prepared pureed foods or strained baby foods can be used. However, homemade pureed foods are less expensive and often taste better.
- If you are having trouble getting enough calories in your diet, try the following suggestions:
 - If you are not able to eat a lot of food at one time, try eating 6 small meals per day (or 3 meals and 3 snacks).
 - Use liquid nutritional supplements, whole milk, juice or other high calorie liquids to puree food
 - Try adding dry milk powder, instant breakfast, or protein powder to pureed food, milkshakes, and puddings.
 - Add butter, margarine, jelly, honey, sugar, or syrup to boost calories in pureed food.

“Slurry”

Some foods, such as breads, cakes, cookies, muffins, biscuits, or other crumbly foods, do not puree well and can be softened and thickened using a slurry mixture. A slurry mixture also helps food stick together.

- Gelatin can be used to slurry foods: Dissolve 1 tablespoon gelatin in 2 cups of liquid. Do not chill or let solidify. Pour over food and allow to set for 15 minutes or until completely softened.

Examples of Foods Recommended for a Pureed Diet

Food Group	Examples of Recommended Food Items	Tips
Meat, Fish, Poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pureed cooked meat, fish, poultry• Pureed casseroles or meat salads (chicken, ham, tuna)• Pureed stews	Use broth or gravy to puree meats.
Milk, Cheese, Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrambled eggs or egg substitute• Custard style yogurt (no chunks, seeds or nuts),• Kefirs and drinkable yogurts• Pureed macaroni & cheese• Cottage cheese• Pureed quiche	Use milk or cream to puree macaroni & cheese, eggs or casseroles.
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pureed fruit• Applesauce (no chunks), apple butter• Smooth, canned pie filling (no chunks)	Use juice to puree fruits
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smooth mashed potatoes• Pureed cooked vegetables• Pureed soups• Refried beans	
Bread, Cereals, Rice, Pasta	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pureed pasta, bread, rice, pancakes, French toast, biscuits• Pureed cookies, muffins, breads, cakes (no nuts or seeds)• Cooked cereals (no nuts or seeds); oatmeal, cream of rice or wheat, grits	Use gravy, broth or sauce to puree rice or pasta. Can also puree peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, muffins, or other baked goods with milk or cream. See slurry section above for breads, muffins, etc.
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Milkshakes• Pudding, custard• Crème Brulee, mousse• Frozen yogurt	