



Patient & Family Guide

2024

# How to Puree Foods



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# How to Puree Foods

Pureed foods are easy to swallow. 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.

## Pureed foods:

- › Are usually eaten with a spoon
- › Do not need to be chewed
- › Have a smooth texture (no lumps, skins, strings, or seeds)
- › Hold their shape on a spoon
- › Do not drip through the prongs of a fork
- › Fall off a spoon in a single spoonful when tilted
- › Are moist
- › Are not sticky
- › Liquid must not separate from puree. Liquid can be stirred back in, as long as the food does not get too thin.
- › Cannot be sucked through a straw

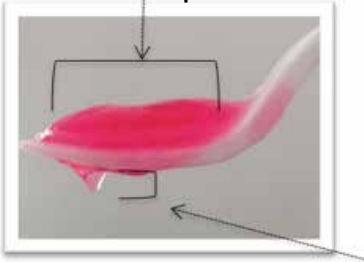
You may need to eat pureed foods that are of a certain thickness:

- Your food should look and feel like **pudding or mousse**.
- Your food can be thinner than pudding.
- Your food should be no thinner than

- If your pureed food needs to be as thick as pudding, test the thickness with the Fork Drip Test and Spoon Tilt Test (see images below).
- See videos of these tests on the International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI) website:
  - › [www.IDDSI.org/framework/food-testing-methods](http://www.IDDSI.org/framework/food-testing-methods)

### **IDDSI Fork Drip Test**

Very thick liquids (purees) sit in a mound or pile above a fork.



A small amount of puree may flow through the prongs of the fork to form a tail, but the puree does not drip through the fork continuously.

### **IDDSI Spoon Tilt Test**



When the spoon is tilted, the puree should hold its shape but fall off easily. The puree should not be firm or sticky.

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## Food safety

**When you puree foods, there is a higher risk of bacteria coming in contact with your food.**

- It is very important to keep your hands, tools, and work area clean when you are handling food.
- Wash your hands well with soap and water. Wipe all work surfaces with hot soapy water. Wash and rinse all utensils and equipment with hot soapy water after each use. Rinse all raw fruits and vegetables before use.
- Keep fruits and vegetables, eggs, meat, and milk products in the fridge until you are ready to use them.
- Cool leftover foods (like soups and casseroles) quickly after cooking. Place the container in a clean dish of cold water until it is cool, then put it in the fridge. Pureeing can be done when food is hot or cold. Be careful when handling hot foods.
- Once food is pureed, use it right away or cool it and store it in the fridge. Store pureed foods in the fridge for no more than 48 hours (2 days). You can freeze pureed foods for 2 to 3 months.

## How to puree

1. Cook meat and vegetables with liquid until well done. This includes boiling, simmering, poaching, steaming, braising, and stewing. **Do not overcook.** Overcooked meat may be stringy or tough. Overcooked vegetables will be soggy.
2. Drain cooked food and keep the liquid.
3. Dice the food into small pieces.
4. Puree the pieces using a hand blender (immersion blender), food processor, or blender until food is smooth:
  - › Measure the amount of food that you want to puree.
  - › **Add liquid**, starting with the smallest amount shown on the guide on page 5.
  - › If needed, add more liquid to make the food moist and smooth, not sticky.

Remember: if your food should be as thick as pudding, **do not** add too much liquid.

### • **Added liquids include:**

- › Cooking liquids
- › Broth
- › Gravies, sauces
- › Blended soups
- › Juice
- › Milk, cream
- › Smooth yogurt
- › Nutritional drinks (like Ensure<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>)

- **You can add other sources of moisture for flavour, like:**
  - › Syrup
  - › Butter, margarine, sour cream, and oil
  - › Mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and BBQ sauce

## **Guide to pureeing foods**

<b>Amount of food</b>	<b>Amount of liquid</b>
½ cup cooked chicken or turkey breast (125 ml)	4 to 6 tbsp (60 to 90 ml)
½ cup cooked, moist beef (125 ml)	3 to 5 tbsp (45 to 75 ml)
½ cup casserole (125 ml)	2 to 4 tbsp (30 to 60 ml)
½ cup cooked fish (125 ml)	2 to 4 tbsp (30 to 60 ml)
½ cup cooked ham (125 ml)	3 to 4 tbsp (45 to 60 ml)
7½ oz. canned fish (225 ml)	2 to 3 tbsp (30 to 45 ml)
½ cup cottage cheese (125 ml)	0 to 2 tbsp (0 to 30 ml)
1 cup carrots, parsnips, or peas (250 ml)	2 to 3 tbsp (30 to 45 ml)
1 cup broccoli or spinach (250 ml)	0 to 2 tbsp (0 to 30 ml)
1 cup drained, canned fruit (250 ml)	0 to 2 tbsp (0 to 30 ml)

# Helpful hints

## Meats and entrees

- Puree meat until smooth. Slowly add liquid.
- Using ground meat can make pureeing easier and food less stringy.
- Use a variety of liquids or sauces to change the flavour, like:
  - › **Beef:** gravy, cranberry sauce, soup, fruit juice, ketchup, horseradish
  - › **Chicken:** gravy, cream sauces, pineapple, fruit juice, teriyaki sauce
  - › **Lamb:** mint jelly, apple jelly, gravy, soup
  - › **Fish:** cheese sauce, white sauce, tartar sauce, mayonnaise, lemon juice
  - › **Pork:** gravy, soup, apple juice, applesauce
- Most casseroles can be pureed (like macaroni and cheese, lasagna, spaghetti, and pizza).
- Try hummus.
- Eggs can be pureed (see recipe on page 14).
- Soft tofu can be pureed with salad dressings, sauces, or soups for flavour.
- Add a small amount of a nut butter (like peanut butter) to cereals or desserts before pureeing. **Do not make it too sticky.**

- **Do not puree:**
  - › Crisp, stringy, tough, or dried meats
  - › Skin, bones, gristle, sausage casings, bacon
  - › Nuts and seeds
  - › Hard and soft cheeses, unless cooked into sauce

## **Grain products**

- Cooked cereal:
  - › Cream of Wheat® (farina), oat bran, and baby food cereals are smooth enough to eat without pureeing.
  - › Other hot cereals may need to be pureed or strained to remove lumps and husks.
- Some cold cereals without nuts or fruit can be soaked with a small amount of milk and pureed until smooth.
  - › Only use 100% bran cereals if softened and pureed into other foods or cereals.
  - › **Do not puree cereals that are stringy, or that have nuts or dried fruit in them.**
- Rice and congee can be hard to puree to the right texture. Cook well and puree with some liquid, sauce, or gravy until smooth. **Do not make it too sticky.**

- Cook pasta until very soft, then puree. Use a tomato, cheese, or cream sauce.
- Breads, cake, muffins, and pancakes can be pureed (see recipe on page 13).
- **Do not** eat sticky, gummy breads and baked goods.

## Soups

- Strain soups and save the liquid for later. Puree the solids until smooth. Add a small amount of the saved liquid, as needed, to reach puree thickness.
- If needed, thicken with crushed croutons, bread crumbs, cracker crumbs, instant potato flakes, leftover mashed potatoes, or commercial thickener (like ThickenUp® or SimplyThick®).

## Vegetables

- Steam or boil vegetables until very tender. Drain well and save liquid. Puree with a small amount of saved liquid from cooking, margarine, butter, or warm sauce.
- Potatoes puree well. If liquid is needed, use warm milk, margarine, butter, sour cream, cooking water, broth, or gravy. **Do not** overpuree. This can make them sticky.

- Many vegetables taste good pureed together (like carrots and turnips, or broccoli and cauliflower).
- Some vegetables with skins should be pureed carefully. There may be large pieces of skin left. Some vegetables with skins do not puree well.
- **Do not** puree raw vegetables, vegetable skins, seeds, corn, peas with tough skins, and stringy vegetables like celery, asparagus, rapini, leafy greens, and snap peas.

## Fruits

- Drain canned fruit well and puree. Save the liquid and use, if needed. If too thin, add commercial thickener.
- Some fresh fruits can be pureed if they do not have skins, seeds, or fibrous parts. Pureed fresh fruit will likely need some commercial thickener added to make sure it is not too watery.
- Mix pureed fruit with yogurt, custard, or pudding.
- Puree fruit with cottage cheese.
- **Do not** puree pineapple, dried fruit, and fruits with seeds and skins.

## Desserts

- Use smooth yogurt, custard, pudding, smooth pie filling, flavoured ricotta cheese, mousse, and pureed fruit.
- If drinking regular thin liquids, try sherbet, ice cream, or Jell-O®.
- Mix some moist and crumbly baked goods with pudding, smooth sauce, melted ice cream, or yogurt to make a puree (like gingerbread with lemon sauce).
- Some baked goods can be pureed with added liquid (like bread pudding with milk or custard, and cheesecake with milk or smooth fruit sauce).
- **Do not** puree pies, cookies, and sticky pastry products, or items with nuts, seeds, and dried fruits.

## Other tips

- Use the same food that the rest of your family is eating, if possible.
- Use foods of different colours to make the plate look appealing.
- Try different herbs, spices, and sauces to add flavour.
- Use an ice cream scoop to serve puree or serve in small dishes.
- To thicken a puree, add:
  - › Bread crumbs
  - › Cracker crumbs
  - › Instant potato flakes
  - › Leftover mashed potatoes
  - › Commercial thickener
- If a puree is too thick, slowly add more liquid.

## **Ways to add calories**

- Add oil, high-fat salad dressings, butter, or margarine to pureed vegetables.
- Use cream or sour cream instead of milk.
- Use high-fat dairy products instead of low-fat.
- Honey, jelly, or syrup can be blended into other foods for extra flavour and calories.
- Add whipped cream to puddings and pureed fruit.
- Add pureed avocado to puddings and mousse.

## **Ways to add protein**

- Use milk-based sauces for liquid instead of broth or tomato-based sauces.
- Puree soft tofu into desserts, casseroles, or soups.
- Puree baked beans or other soft legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas) into soups or casseroles.
- Add skim milk powder or protein powder to casseroles, puddings, and sauces.

## **What to do if constipation (not being able to poop) is a problem**

Purees can be low in fibre. If it is hard to poop, or if you poop less than 3 times a week, you can:

- Try pureed prunes.
- Add prune juice instead of other juices when pureeing fruit or desserts.
- Drink more liquids that are the right thickness for you.
- Use natural bran in your soups, cereals, and casseroles. Start by adding 1 tbsp (15 ml) at each meal and slowly add more.
- Eat very high fibre cereal (like All-Bran<sup>®</sup>, All-Bran<sup>®</sup> Buds, or 100% bran) softened with milk and mixed into other cereal or food to a puree thickness.
- Increase your activity, if possible.
- Use blended fruits, vegetables, or whole grain noodles in recipes.
- If you can drink regular liquids, try Ensure<sup>®</sup> scFOS Fibre or Boost with Fiber<sup>®</sup>. These are nutritional drinks with fibre that you can buy at the drugstore. They can be thickened with xanthan gum thickeners like SimplyThick<sup>®</sup>.
- Using xanthan gum thickeners can help you prevent constipation.

# Recipes

## Pureed baked goods

1. Moist, crumbly baked goods work best. Remove chewy crusts. **Do not** use products with dried fruit or nuts.
2. Take one (1) serving of baked goods.
3. Add 1 tbsp of liquid (like milk, juice, broth, melted butter or margarine, or sweet or savoury sauce).
4. Blend well until smooth and moist, like a pudding or mousse.
5. Add extra liquid as needed to make it smooth and moist, but not sticky.

## Slurried baked goods

1. A slurry is made from a liquid and a thickener. Try:
  - › 1 tbsp (15 ml) ThickenUp® powder plus ½ cup (125 ml) hot water, milk, or juice
  - › 1 tsp (5 ml) ThickenUp® Clear plus ½ cup (125 ml) hot water, milk, or juice
  - › 1 tbsp (15 ml) unflavoured gelatin plus 2 cups (500 ml) boiling water
  - › 12 g package of SimplyThick® honey consistency plus ⅓ cup (80 ml) hot water
2. Remove chewy crusts. **Do not** use baked goods with seeds, dried fruit, or nuts.
3. Pour a layer of slurry in a dish the size of the baked good. Place the baked good on the slurry.
4. Pour the leftover slurry over the baked good until it is soaked, poking it with a fork to help the slurry soak in. Keep any extra slurry.
5. Let the baked good sit until soaked. Refrigerate until set, about 2 hours.
6. Serve with butter, margarine, honey, or smooth jam.

## Pureed eggs

- › 2 large eggs
- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) milk or water
- › 1.4 g package ThickenUp® Clear  
**OR**
- › one (1) 6 g package SimplyThick® Mildly Thick/Nectar consistency gel  
**OR**
- › half (6 g) of one (1) 12 g package SimplyThick® Moderately Thick/Honey consistency gel

1. Heat 1 tsp cooking oil or butter in a frying pan.
2. Crack eggs into a bowl and stir.
3. Scramble eggs in frying pan. Cook well until eggs are not runny.
4. Heat 2 tbsp (30 ml) milk or water in microwave.
5. In food processor, blend eggs, milk, and thickener until well mixed.
6. Scrape down sides of food processor and blend again.
7. Pureed eggs should be smooth and all one consistency. It should pass both the Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt Tests.

- There may be companies in your area that sell pureed meals. To find current information, try searching online for “pureed meals for adults Nova Scotia Canada.”
- Pureed meals can be ordered online from Heart to Home Meals®. Check their website to see if they deliver in your area.
  - › [www.hearttohomemeals.ca](http://www.hearttohomemeals.ca)
- The Victoria Order of Nurses (VON) also sells frozen pureed meals. Contact your local VON office.
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-866-540-2356

**Notes:**

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Dietitian:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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*Prepared by:* Nutrition and Food Services  
*Illustration by:* The International Dysphagia  
Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016  
*Designed by:* Nova Scotia Health Library Services

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.