



Patient & Family Guide  
2020

# How to Puree Foods



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# 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.

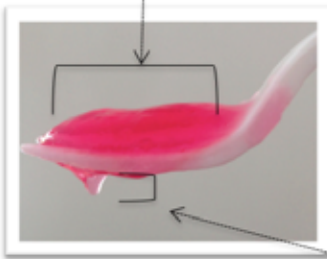
## Pureed foods:

- › are usually eaten with a spoon.
  - › do not need to be chewed.
  - › have a smooth texture with no lumps, skins, strings, or seeds.
  - › hold their shape on a spoon.
  - › do not drip through the prongs/tines of a fork.
  - › fall off a spoon in a single spoonful when tilted.
  - › are moist, not sticky.
  - › liquid must not separate from puree. Liquid can be stirred 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 a certain thickness:
    - Your food should have the look and texture of **pudding or mousse** and hold together.
    - 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 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/)



Extremely thick liquids sit in a mound or pile above the fork



A small amount may flow through and form a tail below the fork

**IDDSI Fork Drip Test**  
Liquid does **not** dollop, or drip continuously through the fork prongs

**IDDSI Spoon Tilt Test**  
Sample holds its shape on the spoon and falls off fairly easily if the spoon is tilted or lightly flicked  
Sample should **not** be firm or sticky



## Food safety first!

When you puree foods, there is an increased risk of adding bacteria.

- Cleanliness is very important when handling food. Make sure your work area is clean. 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.
- Leftover foods (such as soups and casseroles) should be cooled quickly after cooking. Place the container of food 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 pureed, use food 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

- 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.

- Drain cooked food and keep the liquid.
- Dice food into small pieces.
- Puree using a hand 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 the thickness of pudding, do not add too much liquid.

### **Added liquids include:**

- › cooking liquids, broth, gravies, sauces, blended soups, juice, milk, cream, smooth yogurt, and nutritional drinks (like Ensure<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>, etc).
- **You can add other sources of moisture** for flavour, such as:
  - › syrup.
  - › smooth condiments like mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and BBQ sauce.
  - › fats such as butter, margarine, sour cream, and oil.

## 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, peas (250 ml)	2 to 3 tbsp (30 to 45 ml)
1 cup broccoli, 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 to make pureed meals

## Meats and entrees

- Puree meat until **smooth**. Slowly add liquid.
- Starting with ground meat can make pureeing easier and food less stringy.
- Use a variety of liquids or sauces to change the flavour, such as:
  - › **beef**: gravy, cranberry sauce, soup, fruit juice, ketchup, horseradish.
  - › **chicken**: gravy, cream sauces, pineapple, fruit juices, 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 (such as 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.
- Try adding a small amount of a nut butter (such as peanut butter) to cereals or desserts before pureeing. **Be careful not to make the food 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<sup>®</sup> (farina), oat bran, and baby food cereals are smooth.
  - › 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 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.**
- **Pasta:** Cook until very soft, then puree. Use a tomato, cheese, or cream sauce.
- Breads, cake, muffins, and pancakes can be pureed. See recipe on page 12.



- **Do not eat:** sticky, gummy breads and baked goods.

## Soups

- Strain soup and save liquid for later. Puree solids until smooth. Add a small amount of 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.

## Vegetables

- Steam or boil vegetables until very tender. Drain well and save liquid. Puree with a small amount of saved water 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, as this can make them sticky.**
- Many vegetables taste good pureed together (like carrots and turnips, 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, also try sherbet, ice cream, or Jell-O®.
- You can mix some moist and crumbly baked goods with pudding, smooth sauce, melted ice cream, or yogurt to make a puree (such as gingerbread with lemon sauce).

- Some baked goods can be pureed with added liquid (such as 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 individual dishes.
- To thicken a puree, add: bread crumbs, cracker crumbs, instant potato flakes, leftover mashed potatoes, or 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) per 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, and/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>.
- Xanthan gum thickeners can help keep you regular (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 serving of baked goods.
3. Add 1 tbsp of liquid, such as 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) Resource® ThickenUp® Powder plus ½ cup (125 ml) hot water, milk, or juice
  - › 1 tsp (5 ml) Resource® 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** 6 g package SimplyThick® Mildly Thick/Nectar consistency gel

**OR** half a 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 info, 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

Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking for more health information?**

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.*

*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

*Prepared by: Nutrition and Food Services*

*Illustrations by: The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016*

*Designed by: NSHA Library Services*

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

LC85-0624 © September 2020 Nova Scotia Health Authority

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