

If it is hard for you to chew foods, you may benefit from the modified consistency diet.

Modified Consistency Diet

A modified consistency diet provides foods that have a texture that is easier to eat. Foods can be chopped, ground or pureed. The diet is based on your individual food tolerances. People who find it difficult to chew may benefit from this consistency diet. Conditions that call for the use of this diet include absence of teeth, loose dentures or sore gums. You may also need this type of diet if you have had a head or neck injury or surgery. To help this diet work for you:

- Experiment with your favorite dishes. Casseroles, soups and bread products may be pureed or chopped.
- Season meals as usual. Although the consistency may appear bland, the taste does not need to be.
- Dine out with confidence. Appropriate menu choices are available.

The modified consistency diet includes all the foods you are allowed to eat in your regular diet based on your tolerance. This diet may also meet all your nutrition needs if you make healthy food choices.

Helpful Hints

- Cut starches into small pieces, mash or puree.
- Cook fruits; cook or steam vegetables. Use canned food and chop, mash or puree.
- Cook meats (or meat substitutes) with moist heat; chop, slice, grind or puree.
- Puree, grate or melt dairy products.
- To puree foods, first cut foods into medium-size pieces as necessary. Place desired amount in food processor or blender. Add hot broth or gravy to meats and hot starches. Add juice or milk to fruits and cold starches. Blend until smooth.
- Dry items such as meat, biscuits, cereal, crackers and cakes can be moistened with milk, gravy, soup or juice to make them softer to eat.
- If thickening is desired, powdered milk, ice cream, flour, corn starch or instant potatoes may be added.
- Baby food is another option. When using meats, double the portion size (example: increase portion from 2 oz. to 4 oz.).

Examples of Modified Consistency Diets

Dental Soft (foods easy to chew)	Dental–Mechanical Soft (soft foods with ground meat)	Pureed (foods that need little or no chewing)
Breakfast		
½ cup orange juice ¾ cup dry cereal ½ banana ¼ cup scrambled egg 1 slice wheat bread 1 tsp. margarine 1 cup low fat milk	½ cup orange juice ¾ cup dry cereal ½ banana ¼ cup scrambled egg 1 slice wheat bread 1 tsp. margarine 1 cup low fat milk	½ cup orange juice 1 cup hot cereal ½ mashed banana 1 pureed poached egg 1 tsp. margarine 1 cup low fat milk
Lunch		
2 oz. thinly sliced roast beef 1 soft roll ½ cup potato salad ½ cup three bean salad 1 soft cookie	2 oz. shredded roast beef 2 slices bread ½ cup potato salad with finely sliced vegetables ½ cup chopped 3-bean salad 1 soft cookie	2 oz. pureed roast beef 1 cup pureed cream soup ½ cup pureed potato salad ½ cup pureed green beans ½ cup pudding
Dinner		
3 oz. baked chicken ½ cup noodles ½ cup cooked carrots 1 dinner roll 1 teaspoon margarine 1 slice cherry pie 1 cup low fat milk	3 oz. ground baked chicken ½ cup noodles ½ cup diced cooked carrots 1 dinner roll 1 teaspoon margarine 1 slice cherry pie 1 cup low fat milk	3 oz. pureed chicken 1 cup mashed potatoes ½ cup pureed carrots 1 tsp. margarine ½ cup ice cream 1 cup low fat milk

Individuals may wish to select different food consistencies at one meal—for example: pureed chicken, chopped green beans and canned peach halves.

Foods That Are Not Easy to Chew

Food Group	Items
Starches	Any with seeds, nuts, coconut, dried fruits or tough crusts
Fruits and Vegetables	Dried, those with tough skins, seeds, corn
Meats and Substitutes	Whole meat pieces, tough meats, nuts or crunchy peanut butter, bacon
Milk and Dairy Products	Ice cream or yogurt containing nuts, dried fruit, hard candy
Miscellaneous	Popcorn, chips, hard or chewy candy

Talk with your doctor or dietitian or speech pathologist about your specific diet needs or concerns.

Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at hlc@nm.org, or by calling 312.926.5465. You may also visit the HLC on the 3rd floor, Galter Pavilion at 251 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.695.3661.

Developed by: NMH Department of Clinical Nutrition

©April 2016 Northwestern Memorial HealthCare

For additional information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.
900525 (4/16) Modified Consistency Diet