

Helping you stay well

# Eating well with chewing & swallowing problems

Information for you, your family, friends, & carers

Many people find some foods hard to eat for a variety of reasons, such as chewing or swallowing difficulties, or problems with teeth or dentures. If you prefer to have softer meals, or have been told you should eat a 'modified texture' diet, please let us know. We have a range of menu options to cater for your needs.



Helping you  
stay well



Hertfordshire  
**Independent Living Service**  
Supporting your independence

## Who needs to be on a modified texture diet?

A 'modified texture diet' means food with a softer texture and consistency – this is safer for some people to eat. If you need to be on a special softer diet, you would have been advised of this by a speech and language therapist. This may be due to problems with swallowing that are associated with a medical condition. Having the correct texture is very important to ensure eating is safe and comfortable.

## Are there different types of textures?

Yes – there are a range of textures available. Your speech and language therapist will assess you and advise on which will suit you best.

**Texture B:** Thin puree

**Texture C:** Thick puree

**Texture D:** Pre-mashed

**Texture E:** Fork-mashable



*Speech and language therapists work with people to assess eating and drinking difficulties and can provide advice on appropriate food and fluid textures and consistencies*

**At HILS we can provide a range of meals and puddings for all of the different textures that you might be advised to eat.**

## What if I want to have softer food?

Some people may simply prefer to have softer foods that are easier to chew. This might be because of difficulties with teeth or dentures, discomfort, or becoming tired when eating.

**We offer meals that are softer and may be more suitable if you have difficulty chewing.**

Our Community Team delivery staff can also help cutting up foods such as meat or potatoes when they deliver your meal. Please get in touch with your local Support Team for further information.



## What about drinks?

If a speech and language therapist has advised that you need to have your fluids thickened before you drink them, it is important to follow their advice and thicken your drinks to the appropriate consistency. This is because fluids are harder to control and can 'go down the wrong way' into your lungs, which may cause coughing, and can lead to chest infections.

## 3 top tips for eating well on a soft or puree diet

- Take your time over meals and don't rush
- Try eating smaller meals and snacks throughout the day
- Avoid drinking before a meal as this can fill you up

## Good mouth care

Good oral hygiene including brushing your teeth regularly and cleaning dentures as advised by your dentist is important to minimise discomfort when eating. If you are experiencing trouble with your teeth or dentures, contact your dentist for help and advice.

## What if I am losing weight?

If you feel you are struggling to maintain your weight, or you are losing weight, get in touch with our Nutrition & Wellbeing team who can provide you with our booklet Achieving Healthy Weight Gain which you may find helpful. You may also want to contact your GP if you are worried about your weight.

If you are having problems swallowing, or coughing when eating or drinking but have not been assessed by a speech and language therapist, please discuss this with your GP.



## We also have a selection of additional booklets and leaflets for the following health conditions:

Diabetes, caring for someone with dementia, feeling forgetful, good bowel health, coeliac disease, kidney problems, IBS, COPD, food labelling.

This resource has been compiled using available current evidence and has been approved by a team of dietitians, nutritionists, and a speech and language therapist. The information is for general use and should not replace individual tailored advice given by a healthcare professional.

For further information, please contact your local Support Team or visit our website on [www.hertsindependentliving.org](http://www.hertsindependentliving.org) or contact us directly through [nutrition@hertsindependentliving.org](mailto:nutrition@hertsindependentliving.org) Alternatively, please call Hertfordshire Independent Living Service on **0330 2000 103** (all calls charged at local rate)