

Easy to Chew Diet

What is an easy to chew diet?

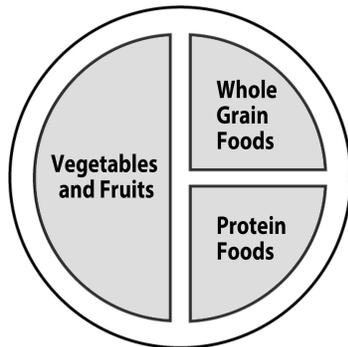
Some people may have problems chewing foods that are hard or crunchy. This can happen for many reasons such as mouth pain, poorly-fitting dentures, or missing teeth. Children going through tooth development may also have difficulties chewing or swallowing.

Easy to chew foods are **soft** and **moist** so that they are easier to eat.

Eating well

Canada's Food Guide recommends eating a variety of healthy foods each day. This includes:

- Having plenty of vegetables and fruits
- Choosing whole grain foods
- Eating protein foods
- Making water your drink of choice



General tips

- Choose soft moist foods. You may need to chop, mince, or mash foods to make them easier to chew.
- Avoid dry, crispy, stringy, or tough foods as these are hard to chew.
- Braise, boil, simmer, or poach meat slowly in water or broth to make it tender. Try a slow cooker or pressure cooker to soften meats.
- Use broth, butter, gravy, soft margarine, oil, salad dressings, sauces, or sour cream to moisten foods.

Vegetables and fruits

Foods to choose:

- soft cooked, canned, fresh, or frozen vegetables
- soft raw vegetables (ripe avocado, cucumbers, mushrooms, tomatoes, zucchini)
- finely shredded salads (coleslaw, leafy greens, lettuce)
- applesauce, fruit cups, or fruit sauces
- soft ripe fresh, canned, or frozen fruits (bananas, berries, seedless grapes, kiwi, melons, pears, strawberries, seedless watermelon)
- crushed or cooked pineapple
- dried fruit, cooked, stewed, or baked in bread or muffins

Foods to avoid:

- hard raw vegetables (carrots, celery)
- salads that are not shredded (Caesar, spinach, tossed)
- crispy dry French fries, hash browns, or potato skins
- hard fresh fruit (whole apple with skin)
- uncooked dried fruit

Grain foods

Foods to choose:

- cooked cereals (Cream of Wheat[®], oat bran, oatmeal, Sunny Boy[®])
- cold cereals that soften in milk (bran flakes, corn flakes, rice crisps)
- soft bread products (biscuits, bread stuffing, buns, buttered toast, muffins)
- bread with small seeds (flax bread)
- French toast, pancakes, or waffles, served with applesauce or syrup to moisten
- soft cooked barley, couscous, pasta, or rice
- soft crackers, such as soda crackers
- soft cereal bars, such as Nutri-Grain[®] bars
- ground flax seed or wheat bran stirred into cereals

Foods to avoid:

- dry, crusty, or chewy breads (bagels, bread sticks, crusty buns, French bread, pitas, dry muffins)
- hard crackers and granola bars
- dry pizza crust, such as thin crust pizza

Protein foods

Foods to choose:

- milk: plain or flavoured
- buttermilk, milkshakes, or fortified soy beverages
- yogurt
- cottage cheese, cheddar, processed cheese slices, or ricotta cheese
- diced, cubed, or grated cheese, or cheese as an ingredient in any allowed foods
- soft tofu/soy protein
- soft cooked beans, lentils, peas, or soft dishes made with allowed ingredients (soft bean salad)
- smooth nut butters spread on allowed foods or made into a smoothie
- all cooked eggs or egg substitutes, including omelets and quiche with allowed ingredients
- soft moist tender meat or poultry (hamburger patty, breaded pork cutlet, roast, Salisbury steak)
- canned fish with bones removed (canned salmon with mashed bones is allowed)
- tender boneless moist fish that flakes easily
- minced meat, made with allowed ingredients (casseroles, chili, lasagna, meatloaf, meatballs, shepherd's pie, or stew)
- sandwiches with salad-type or minced fillings, shaved or sliced meat, cheese, or shredded vegetables (shredded lettuce)
- sausages and wieners with soft casings, processed meats (deli-style or luncheon meats)
- plain single patty, moist cheeseburgers, or hamburgers with a bun
- all soups made with allowed ingredients

Foods to avoid:

- custards, puddings, or yogurt with dried fruit, granola, nuts, or seeds
- crispy melted stringy cheese topping (for example, on top of casserole)
- crunchy nut butters
- nuts and seeds, whole or chopped
- bacon, bacon bits, or beef jerky
- crispy or fried fish, meat, poultry, or organ meat
- sausages or wieners with hard casing, such as garlic sausage or Kolbassa

Desserts and snacks

Foods to choose:

- ice cream, Popsicles[®], sherbet, soy frozen desserts, or frozen yogurt
- custards, milk puddings, or mousse
- soft or easy to break cookies (digestive biscuits)
- soft baked desserts (cream or pumpkin pies, moist cakes)
- jellied desserts

Foods to avoid:

- hard cookies or desserts with nuts or seeds
- candy, gum, licorice, or toffee

Condiments and sauces

Foods to choose:

- condiments that are smooth or have small pieces, such as BBQ sauce, horseradish, ketchup, mustard, or relish
- smooth gravies or sauces, such as cheese sauce, hollandaise sauce, or white sauce
- sliced or cut pickles (beets, dill), pitted olives

Foods to avoid:

- herbs, spices, and seasonings with hard seeds, such as coriander seeds or peppercorn
- spreads, gravies, or sauces that have large hard pieces
- whole hard pickles, pickled onions, or olives with pits