

Eat Right: Soft & Bite-Sized Foods



Soft & Bite-Sized Foods

Swallowing problems are very common after a stroke. Swallowing is a complicated task, which needs your brain to coordinate lots of different muscles. If your stroke damages the part of your brain that does this, then this will affect your ability to swallow. Doctors use the term dysphagia to describe problems with swallowing.

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI) recognizes that soft & bite-sized foods need a moderate amount of chewing for the tongue to 'collect' the food into a ball and bring it to the back of the mouth for swallowing. If you are unable to swallow safely, then you may need to make changes to your diet until you can.

Ground, chopped, and pureed foods are included in this diet, as well as foods that break apart without a knife. The foods in this diet are easy to eat and do not need a lot of chewing to swallow safely. Try these tips to help you understand what you need to do.

- All foods should be cooked soft and chopped so the pieces are no bigger than the size of a dime.
- Meat and fish should be cooked tender. For meat, if unable to cook soft, it should be minced and moistened. Fish should be soft enough to break apart.
- Vegetables should be steamed or boiled. Avoid stir fried vegetables as they are too firm and are not suitable.
- Do not eat regular dry bread due to a high choking risk.
- Rice requires a sauce to moisten it and hold it together. Rice should not be sticky or gluey and should not separate into individual grains when cooked and served.

Meet the Author

Ricca Chelsi Palero is a dietetic intern who is on track to becoming a registered dietitian nutritionist. She currently attends University of the Pacific working on her Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition. Ricca's goal is to promote healthy food choices, improve energy and alertness, and help others understand the connection of food, nutrition, and their well-being.



Visit Kaiser Permanente Comprehensive Stroke Community Resource Website: <http://kp.org/sac-valley-stroke-center>.
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