

Difficulties Chewing and Swallowing

Good nutrition is important at any age



With age, chewing can become tiring or painful, and we may cough or choke when trying to swallow. These are signs of **chewing and swallowing problems**, which can **affect what and how much we eat**.

If you have problems with your teeth, gums, or dentures, **see your dentist**.

If you have trouble swallowing, **see your healthcare provider**.

CHEWING & SWALLOWING

If you have trouble chewing or swallowing, **choose soft foods or change the way you prepare foods**.

Tips to make foods easier to chew and swallow:



Try different food textures to see what suits you best



Chop, mash, or purée foods with a knife, blender, or processor



Add gravy or sauce to help soften and moisten food



Choose thick liquids*, as they may be easier to swallow

*More information about thick liquids can be found on the next page.

FOOD TEXTURES

Blended or puréed liquids (runs off spoon slowly)

Smooth, creamy soup, and applesauce

Soft foods and thick liquids (pudding-like)

Custard, pudding, yogurt, mashed potato, turnip, squash or yam, and smooth, cooked cereal

Semi-solid foods (firm, but not tough)

Cooked pasta, puréed food, scrambled eggs, tofu, and ground meat

Solid foods (firm, but not hard)

Soft-cooked vegetables, soft fruit, diced meat, and toast

SOFT FOODS

Vegetables and fruit

Well-cooked vegetables, low-sugar canned fruit, applesauce, puréed vegetables and fruits

Whole grain foods

Quinoa, well-cooked whole grain pasta, fresh whole grain bread, soft, whole grain cereal, oatmeal, cream of wheat

Protein foods

Low-fat/low-sugar yogurt, kefir, nut butters, cooked beans, peas, or lentils, tofu, egg, fish, ground meat (e.g., beef, chicken, pork)

Brought to you by the Nutrition & Aging Lab at the University of Waterloo.

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