SNF SLP RESOURCES

Texture-Modified Diets at a Glance

Free quick reference for the four most common solid-food levels.

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WHY TEXTURE MATTERS

When someone has trouble swallowing, food that is too hard, dry, or loose can go down the wrong way. Matching the food texture to the person's swallowing ability helps them eat more safely. The levels below follow the IDDSI framework (iddsi.org). A person's own diet order always comes first.

THE FOUR LEVELS

COMMON NAME	IDDSI LEVEL	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Regular	Level 7	Everyday foods, no texture changes
Chopped	Level 6, Soft and Bite-sized	Soft, moist, tender, cut into small pieces (about 1.5 cm, or roughly half an inch)
Ground	Level 5, Minced and Moist	Soft and moist with tiny lumps (4 mm or smaller), easy to mash with a fork, can be scooped
Puree	Level 4, Pureed	Smooth, no lumps, holds its shape on a spoon, needs no chewing

Note: terms like chopped and ground vary between facilities. Confirm what your kitchen means by each.

EXAMPLES THAT USUALLY FIT

Chopped moist baked chicken or fish in small pieces, soft scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, soft-cooked carrots, canned peaches

Ground finely ground meat with gravy, flaked fish in sauce, mashed beans, mashed banana, applesauce, soft oatmeal

Puree pureed meats and vegetables, smooth mashed potatoes, smooth yogurt, pudding, custard

FOODS TO AVOID ON MODIFIED DIETS

- Bread, crackers, and chips
- Nuts, seeds, and popcorn
- Raw vegetables and whole grapes
- Tough or dry meat, sausage casings
- Sticky foods like thick peanut butter and caramel
- Mixed textures, such as soup with chunks or cereal in milk.

THREE QUICK TIPS

1. Moisten food with gravy, sauce, or broth. Dry food is harder to swallow.
2. Remove skins, seeds, stems, and gristle before cutting or blending.
3. Check the texture, not just the food name. How a food is prepared can change its level.

IMPORTANT

This is general educational information, not medical advice. It does not replace a person's own diet order, allergy information, or the guidance of their speech-language pathologist, dietitian, or physician. Drink thickness is a separate order. Texture descriptions are based on the IDDSI framework; see iddsi.org for the full standard and testing methods.

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