

MEALS
ON WHEELS

Driven by nutrition.

dysphagia





Thousands of clients every year are assisted by Meals on Wheels (SA) Inc. to live independently in their own home. The job is an immense task but it is extremely rewarding and we provide around 5,000 meals each week day to our clients.

In this booklet we have put together some handy information regarding chewing and swallowing problems (Dysphagia) and what we can do to assist if you experience difficulties in these areas. We have also included some 'easy chew' recipes and products for you to supplement your Meals on Wheels meal.

Meals on Wheels (SA) Inc. understand that there are many clients who require texture modifications to their meals for a variety of reasons. Some people may find it difficult to consume foods they previously had no trouble eating e.g. lamb chops, steak, schnitzel, etc. We all need good nutrition nonetheless – so we can't stop eating. If it is uncomfortable to bite, chew or swallow, the process of eating may become very tiring and difficult.

Swallowing difficulties, also known as dysphagia (pronounced 'dis fay juh'), are common among the ageing population.

This process is not only of concern to the ageing population but can also be the result of injury, illness or disability.

Dysphagia may occur due to a variety of medical conditions (e.g. Stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Motor Neuron Disease, Dementia) and may be associated with the normal ageing process despite no specific medical conditions.

Indicators of a problem

Eating and swallowing difficulties can present themselves in a variety of ways. If you find yourself choking, gagging or coughing repeatedly during a meal there is a possibility that you are experiencing dysphagia. If it is becoming increasingly difficult to chew some or all foods adequately, (possibly due to loose dentures or sore teeth or gums) then eating may become uncomfortable and less enjoyable – as well as a potential health risk.

What can happen if you don't attend to the problem?

Untreated dysphagia can result in problems ranging from discomfort while eating, to weight loss, illness such as chest infections and/or pneumonia, and even death from severe respiratory illness or choking.

What can be done to help?

Often modifications to the texture of a person's diet are required to reduce the risks of choking and/or food/fluid going down the wrong way and entering the lungs (aspiration). As well as food being needed for nutritional purposes it also has a very social and emotional component needed for everyone's survival and there are many ways

that our meals could be cooked, presented and eaten. Speech Pathologists help us to ensure that we provide a meal that is suitable for our clients who are having problems with chewing and/or swallowing. We do this by providing a Soft meal, Minced and Moist meal or Smooth Pureed meal (previously known to Meals on Wheels as vitamised). Our meal consists of a soup, main course and dessert and each course will meet this desired texture.

Some people with swallowing difficulties will also require thickened fluids. Meals on Wheels (SA) Inc does not supply thickened fluids or a thickening agent; therefore it may be necessary for you to thicken some soups we provide to make sure that it is the correct consistency as per instructions from your Speech Pathologist.

Sometimes a Speech Pathologist will recommend that a person be assisted or supervised while eating or drinking, to ensure their safety. Meals on Wheels (SA) Inc. is unable to provide supervision or physical assistance with meals. It is your responsibility, or the people who are helping you, to seek other supports.

What can Meals on Wheels (SA) do?

When you are referred to Meals on Wheels our personnel gather as much information as possible in order to meet your nutritional needs. Even though we do not cater for food likes and dislikes, we do want to ensure that the consistency of a meal is ideal for you. If there is any medical reason you should not receive a particular food e.g. if you have a food allergy then a medical certificate is required to support this request. If there are any chewing or swallowing problems we will provide you with a meal of the appropriate texture. Meals on Wheels may suggest that a current (within the previous three months) Speech Pathology report be obtained to ensure that the meal provided meets your requirements.

Meals on Wheels personnel are aware of the importance of adhering to specific dietary recommendations and must not provide any food items that do not meet the recommendation for clients with swallowing difficulties – even if a client asks for them.

In the instance where a client is not satisfied with the outcome of a Speech Pathology assessment and refuses to adhere to Speech Pathology recommendations, Meals on Wheels will be unable to provide a service due to the risk to the client.

Key points

- It is vitally important that individuals requiring a texture modified diet receive the correct diet to ensure their nutritional needs are met and swallowing safety is not compromised.
- The texture of the meal must be consistent and must meet guidelines provided by a Speech Pathologist.
- Minced and Moist and Smooth Pureed (previously known to Meals on Wheels as vitamised) texture modified meals are sourced from our Central Production Facility at Kent Town kitchen to ensure consistency of product across our Branches (except where the meals are supplied by country hospitals).

Assessing clients for texture modified meals

1 When a referral is received for the texture modified meals – Minced and Moist and Smooth Pureed, Meals on Wheels (SA) Inc. requires a current Speech Pathology report to accompany the referral. Our Central Office staff will inform any party e.g. hospitals, doctors, individuals of this requirement prior to a visit for assessment.

2 The report will be attached to our client database as well as being passed on to our contracted Speech Pathologist who monitors all our clients requiring our Minced and Moist and Smooth Pureed meals.

3 Where a Speech Pathology report is not provided, Meals on Wheels Client Services Department will contact the person referring the client to request a report.

4 If necessary, Meals on Wheels Central Office staff will assist our clients to organise a Speech Pathologist report by working with any other services already providing assistance e.g. Domiciliary Care SA. In some cases a community Speech Pathologist can be utilised but there may be a waiting period, which could delay commencement of our service. We can refer clients to our own consultant Speech Pathologist who will visit clients in their home to conduct a swallowing assessment. If this option is used then the assessment can generally take place within two working days on receipt of the referral. There is a cost for this service, which needs to be met by the client.

5 Central Office staff will advise the relevant Branch of the results of the swallowing assessment and Speech Pathology recommendations so that the correct meal can be ordered. This is explained further in the booklet.



Food Textures.

Following assessment, the speech pathologist will recommend the food consistency that is safest and easiest for you to swallow.

The entire meal must meet the recommended texture, not just part of the meal.

Standardised terminology and definitions for texture modified foods and fluids now exist in Australia (Dietitians Association of Australia and Speech Pathology Australia Limited, 2007).

Three different levels of food texture modification are now recommended:

Texture A: Soft

Food is soft and moist, can be chewed but does not require biting, and can be easily broken up with a fork.

Texture B: Minced and Moist

Food is soft and moist, should easily form into a ball, and can easily be mashed to a particle size of half a centimetre.

Texture C: Smooth Pureed

(previously known to Meals on Wheels as vitamised).

Food is smooth and lump free.

Our personnel may request a Soft diet if a client, during discussion at assessment, identifies chewing problems due to dental issues etc. The local Kitchen currently provides Soft meals. The Minced and Moist or Smooth Pureed options are sourced either from our Central Production Facility (any queries contact the Manager at Kent Town) or from hospitals at our country branches. A Speech Pathology report is always required. The entire meal is texture modified: soup, main course and dessert.



A Meals on Wheels meal, if eaten in its entirety, will provide a little over a third of daily nutrition requirements. Now that's a great basis for a healthy diet but it's not the end of it. You'll need something for breakfast and dinner during the week, as well as snacks. It's no good having something provided to help you with your dysphagia at lunch time and then eating other things that could cause you to choke or aspirate at other times.

We have included some easy recipes and examples of food you can purchase in this booklet. It is important to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods even when you have a swallowing problem.

See the Meals on Wheels **Healthy Eating** guide for some ideas regarding how much you should be eating in a day and how to fortify all your milk to add an extra boost.

All new Meals on Wheels clients receive a **Healthy Eating** guide on assessment but if you would like a copy please contact our Central office.

On the following pages there are some suggestions regarding the types of food that fit into the modified texture diet that you require.

Soft Meal.

Types of food that you could chose from:

Breakfast

- Cereals well moistened with milk;
- Porridge or semolina;
- Poached or scrambled eggs;
- Very soft fruit e.g. banana or stewed fruit or tinned peaches;
- Yoghurt.

Weekend Lunches or Dinner

- Tins or tetra packs of soup;
- Stews, casseroles with small pieces of tender meat or chicken, mornay;
- Steamed fish – with extra gravy, sauce, lasagna, baked beans;
- Rice (well cooked), soft pasta and noodles – served with a sauce or gravy;
- Soft sandwiches with very moist fillings and crusts removed (e.g. egg, shaved ham, canned tuna – use plenty of mayonnaise);
- Soft well cooked vegetables served in small pieces or mashed;
- Very soft fruit e.g. banana or stewed fruit or tinned peaches;
- Yoghurt, custard, rice pudding, bread and butter pudding.

Purchasing options/snacks

Available from the supermarket suitable for a Soft Diet

Breakfast

- Weetbix – hot milk or water to soften, allow to stand to absorb fluid before eating;
- Uncle Toby's Instant Porridge or Quick Oats.

Lunches or Dinner

- Heinz Baked Beans (tinned);
- Tinned spaghetti;
- Soft cheeses, e.g. camembert, cottage cheese, ricotta;
- Shaved ham, or avocado for sandwich fillings;
- Sandwich tuna – moistened with mayonnaise; crusts removed;
- Harvest sausage and vegetables;
- Frozen lasagne – cook well to ensure pasta is soft enough to cut with a fork;
- Potato gnocchi (San Remo, Latina) – with pasta sauce;
- Fresh ripe avocado.

Dessert/Snacks

- Fresh ripe banana, or mango;
- Tinned peaches, apricots, mango;
- Rice cream, creamed rice (tinned);
- Moist cakes (extra moisture, e.g. custard may be required);
- Ice cream (if there is not a requirement for thickened fluids);
- Sponge cake, plain or iced;
- Jam rollettes;
- Golden pikelets;
- Nestle Milky Way chocolate bars – at room temperature.

Pasta Bolognaise

Serves 2

200g mince
1 small onion
400g (Small) can chopped tomatoes
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 teaspoons mixed herbs
1 tablespoons oil

Peel and chop onion finely. Heat oil and fry gently until translucent. Add mince, cook till brown, mashing with a fork to break up any lumps. Add tomatoes, tomato paste and herbs. When sauce comes to boil, reduce heat and simmer until thick. Serve with well cooked small pasta shapes.

Spanish omelette

Serves 2

1 tablespoons Butter or margarine
1 cup finely chopped vegetables
1 to 2 slices of ham – chopped
4 eggs
1 – 2 tablespoons parmesan cheese

Heat butter or margarine in a small non stick frypan. Add vegetables, sauté over gentle heat until tender but not brown. Break eggs into a bowl, add parmesan, beat lightly with a fork, and pour over cooked vegetables. Stir gently to distribute mixture evenly, and then allow to set over a low heat. When golden underneath, place under a hot grill to set the top. Do not over cook, as the omelette will toughen.

Bread and butter pudding

Serves 4 to 6

6 slices of fruit loaf, no crusts
3 eggs
1 tablespoons sugar
3 cups milk
Margarine and Jelly jam to spread onto bread

Spread bread with margarine and jelly jam (e.g. kids jam – no fruit pieces). Place in a deep baking tray. Mix eggs and milk and sugar together and pour over bread. Cover tray with foil and place in a larger tray with water. Bake in a moderately slow oven 40 to 45 minutes until set.

Our **Healthy Eating** guide also has some recipes that suit a Soft diet and they include:

- Zucchini Slice
(omit bacon and slice very finely).
- Apricot Chicken
(using boneless chicken).
- Baked Fish
(using boneless fish).
- Impossible Pie
(omit bacon or slice very finely).
- Hearty Beef Casserole.
- Lamb Stew.

Minced & Moist Diet.

Types of food that you could chose from:

Breakfast

- Porridge, Weetbix, semolina;
- Poached or scrambled eggs;
- Mashed soft fruit e.g. banana or finely chopped stewed fruit;
- Smooth yoghurt (no fruit pieces, e.g. natural, vanilla, honey).

Weekend Lunches or Dinner

- Coarsely pureed soups;
- Minced meat, chicken, fish with gravy or white sauce – use a food processor, smooth bolognaise sauce with well cooked, moist rice, tinned curried mince, Frozen shepherds pie (with any crusty bits removed);
- Casserole dishes partially blended to reduce particle size;
- Very soft and moist egg dishes, e.g. scrambled eggs, soft quiches (filling only – no pastry);
- Well cooked legumes, partially mashed or blended;
- Tender cooked vegetables that are easily mashed with a fork;
- Finely chopped soft pieces of canned peaches or stewed fruit (may need to puree);
- Custard, yoghurt, smooth puddings, dairy desserts, mousse.

Purchasing options/snacks

Available from the supermarket suitable for a Minced and Moist Diet.

Breakfast

- Weetbix – hot milk or water to soften; allow to stand to absorb fluid before eating;
- Uncle Toby's Instant Porridge or Quick Oats.

Lunches or Dinner

- Heinz Baked Beans (tinned) – finely mashed before serving;
- Tinned spaghetti – finely mashed before serving;
- Frozen fish fillets in sauce – mashed before serving; no batter;
- Instant mashed potato (Continental, Deb);
- Couscous – with lots of butter/margarine to moisten;
- Ricotta cheese, cottage cheese;
- Fresh ripe avocado.

Dessert/Snacks

- Fresh ripe banana, or mango – finely mashed before serving;
- Snack pack dessert;
- Crème caramel;
- Yoghurt – may need to have fruit pieces removed;
- Ice cream (if there is not a requirement for thickened fluids);
- Rice cream, creamed rice (tinned);
- Plain sponge cake – mashed with custard;
- Ripe banana – fork mashed;
- Yoghurt, smooth puddings, dairy desserts;
- Finely chopped soft pieces of canned peaches or stewed fruit.

Chicken patties

Serves 2

200g minced chicken
2 teaspoons cornflour
2 slices wholemeal bread, crusts removed and chopped finely
1 potato, cooked and mashed
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoons oil
1 tablespoons flour
Pinch dry mustard

Gravy:

1 cups stock
1 tablespoons gravy powder
1 tablespoons tomato paste

Fry onion until very soft. Place minced chicken in food processor with cornflour and process until smooth. Add cooked onion and mix, add breadcrumbs, and potato and mix well. Form patties and dust with flour. Place into baking dish. Add gravy powder (mixed with a little cold stock) to remaining stock and bring to boil. Simmer for 2 minutes. Add tomato paste. Pour over patties. Cover with foil and bake in moderate oven for 40 minutes or until tender. Mash down with a fork before serving.

Fish mornay

Serves 2

200g fish fillets (no skin or bones)
1 tablespoons lemon juice
1 bay leaf
100ml milk
50ml fish stock
30g grated cheese
1/2 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 tablespoons flour

Cut fish into small pieces and place into greased baking dish, and half cover with water. Add lemon juice and bay leaf. Cover with foil and bake in slow oven until fish is tender (20 minutes). Alternatively steam in a microwave oven. Remove bay leaf and reserve liquid for sauce. Melt butter or margarine in a pan and blend in flour. Add fish stock and milk gradually, stir over heat till thickened. Add cheese. Flake fillets by hand, checking for bones and add to sauce. Reheat to serve. Serve with mashed potato.

Creamed rice

Serves 4

3 cups milk
1/2 cup rice
1/3 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Combine sugar and milk in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Gradually add rice to gently boiling milk, stirring constantly. Reduce heat, simmer gently until 2/3 of liquid is absorbed and rice is tender. Stir in vanilla.

Here's two recipes from our **Healthy Eating** guide:

- Savoury mince.
- Tuna casserole (you will need to chop vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini very finely, and you can add creamed corn and thicken with 1 tablespoon of cornflour if needed).

Smooth Pureed Diet.

(previously known as vitamised by Meals on Wheels)

Types of food that you could chose from:

Breakfast

- Pureed porridge;
- Pureed semolina;
- Weetbix and hot milk – left to sit for at least 5 minutes before eating;
- Pureed fresh or tinned fruits;
- Smooth yoghurts – with no fruit lumps e.g. natural, vanilla, honey.

Weekend Lunches or Dinner

- Pureed soup, blended soups with lumps removed;
- Pureed meat, fish, chicken – puree with gravy or white sauce;
- Extra jug gravy, sauce;
- Mashed potato;
- Pureed vegetables;
- Pureed fruit and thick custard, smooth yoghurt (no fruit lumps).

Purchasing options/snacks

Available from the supermarket for Smooth Pureed Diet

Breakfast

- Weetbix – hot milk or water to soften, allow to stand to absorb fluid before eating.

Lunches or Dinner

- Tinned soups – select smooth soups such as potato or pumpkin, or puree well to remove all texture/lumps;
- Instant mashed potato (Continental, Deb);
- Heinz pureed meals (available in baby section of supermarket) – 4 to 6 month age group.

Dessert/Snacks

- Custard;
- Crème caramel;
- Instant pudding;
- Ice cream (if there is not a requirement for thickened fluids);
- Smooth yoghurt (no fruit pieces) e.g. natural, vanilla, honey;
- Mousse – savory and sweet;
- Prepackaged pureed fruit tubs (available with tinned fruit at the supermarket);
- Gelled cakes or cake slurry, e.g. sponge cake saturated with jelly.

Salmon mousse

Serves 2

- 1 medium tin of salmon, drained*
- 50ml tartare sauce*
- 1 tablespoons sour cream*
- 50ml plain yoghurt*
- 2 drops Tabasco sauce*
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice*
- 2¹/₂ teaspoons gelatine*
- ¹/₄ cup water*

Combine salmon, tartare sauce, sour cream, yoghurt, Tabasco and lemon juice in vitamiser and blend until smooth. Dissolve gelatine in water and stir over hot water until melted. Add to vitamiser and blend into mixture. Pour into moulds and leave to set.

Semolina pudding

Serves 4

- 600ml milk*
- ¹/₄ cup semolina*
- ¹/₂ teaspoons vanilla*
- 2 tablespoons sugar*
- 1 egg, separated*

Heat milk in saucepan. When almost boiling, sprinkle in semolina, stir continuously until boiling. Reduce heat, simmer uncovered 10 to 15 minutes until soft, stir frequently. Remove from heat; add vanilla and sugar, cool slightly. Beat in egg yolk. Whisk egg white until stiff and then fold into semolina mixture. Pour into greased dish. Bake in moderate oven 30 to 40 minutes or until top is light brown. **Remove any thick skin that forms on the top.**





A word about fluids.

Adequate fluid intake is important. Try to drink a variety of nourishing drinks especially if you are losing weight, e.g. juice, milk, iced coffee, milkshakes.

Water, tea, coffee and even cordial and soft drink also provide valuable fluids. Some individuals with a swallowing problem will also require thickened fluids – follow your Speech Pathologist's instructions.

Nutrition when you have a swallowing problem.

It is important to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods even when you have a swallowing problem and need to modify your food. As outlined above the Meals on Wheels **Healthy Eating** guide will give you some guidelines about how much of the different food groups that you should be eating.

When you move from a Soft to a Minced and Moist then a Smooth Pureed diet there are a number of foods that you are not able to eat. This means that your nutrition can be more at risk. It is suggested that individuals who need a Minced and Moist or a Smooth Pureed diet might need vitamin and mineral supplements – please discuss this with your Doctor or Dietitian.



If you are losing weight

It is easy to lose weight when you are eating food that is different to the food that you used to enjoy. It is important to monitor your weight regularly. If you are underweight or are losing weight then the following suggestions will help:

- Eat small meals often. Make sure you have snacks between meals;
- Use full cream dairy foods e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt as these will provide you with more energy (calories or kilojoules);
- Drink nourishing milk-based or fruit-based drinks instead of low-energy drinks like tea, coffee and water (However you do need to ensure your total fluid intake is good);
- Add skim milk powder to milk, milk drinks, porridge, custard, mashed potato, sauces and cream soups as per the instructions on fortifying milk in the Meals on Wheels (SA) Inc.

Healthy Eating guide;

- Extra margarine, cream and grated cheese can be added to soups, stews, vegetables and sauces;
- Add sugar and honey to drinks, desserts and cereals;
- Cream, ice cream, yoghurt and custard can be added to stewed fruit desserts and drinks;
- Try commercial supplements e.g. Sustagen, Ensure, Nutridrink, Build Up, Emprocal to further boost your nutrition. Discuss with your Doctor or Dietitian.

Here are some nourishing drink recipes to try

Milkshake

- 1 cup full cream milk
- 2 tablespoons milk powder
- 1 scoop ice cream
- 2 tablespoons topping (chocolate, strawberry or pineapple)
- 1 tablespoons cream

Blend first three ingredients. Serve in a tall glass with a dollop of cream.

Hot Mocha

- 1 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoons instant coffee powder/granules
- 1 cup full cream milk
- 1 tablespoons milk powder
- Dash of cinnamon

Combine ingredients and give a quick stir.

Banana Smoothie

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons milk powder
- 1 teaspoons honey or sugar to taste
- 1 scoop ice cream (optional)

Blend all ingredients together using a blender or egg beater. Serve with a sprinkle of nutmeg if desired. Strawberries or other fresh or tinned fruit can be used if desired.

Fruit Sherbet

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of favourite fruit juice
- 1 scoop vanilla ice cream
- 1 banana if desired

Blend all ingredients together using a blender or egg beater.

Constipation

A Minced and Moist diet or a Smooth Pureed diet can be lacking in fibre, causing a potential problem with constipation. You could try the following ideas:

- 1 Make sure you drink plenty of fluid.
- 2 Increase walking if possible.
- 3 Soak some rice bran into your breakfast cereal or even into a soup or stew or casserole.
- 4 Try some prune juice or pureed prunes.
- 5 Metamucil® may be suitable, but check with your doctor – you need to drink plenty of fluid with this fibre supplement. Alternatively try Benefibre – available from your pharmacy.

If you still do not experience any improvement or have any questions, check with your General Practitioner or Speech Pathologist. Our Central office Client Services department is available for any further queries or on policy issues contact our Client Services Manager.

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- Speech Pathology Australia – Melbourne
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