

Client Name:

Date:

RDN/NDTR:

Email:

Phone:

# IDDSI Level 7

## Regular Easy-to-Chew Nutrition Therapy

You may be prescribed a level 7 regular easy-to-chew diet if you need softer foods because you had a recent illness, you have mouth or jaw pain, or you prefer softer foods.

You should not follow the level 7 regular easy to chew diet if you have swallowing problems (dysphagia), have a higher risk for choking, or if you are unable to eat without supervision.

This diet is right for you if you are able to:

- Bite off pieces of soft, tender foods
- Chew soft foods
- Move food around in your mouth with your tongue
- Eat independently
- Avoid or remove hard pieces of food without assistance
- Choose bite-sized foods that are safe to eat on your own
- Bite, chew, and swallow without easily getting tired

### What Is a Level 7 Regular Easy to Chew Diet?

The level 7 regular easy to chew diet includes eat soft, tender foods that cut easily such as moist, cooked meats, fish, vegetables, potatoes and pasta. Foods of all sizes are OK to eat and are not restricted. You can also eat bread, bread products, and sandwiches as long as it has been approved by your health care provider. You may be able to include foods that have mixed thin and thick textures and liquids together such as some soups and stews, cereal and milk, and casseroles with sauces that separate if your clinician approves.

Foods to Avoid

- Hard, dry, tough, chewy, or fibrous foods such as pineapple, raw vegetables, and nuts.
- Crispy, crunchy, sharp, and spiky foods such as bacon, raw apple, and corn chips
- Foods with stringy texture, pips/seeds, bones, or gristle such as string beans, pumpkin seeds, and rhubarb
- Sticky or gummy foods such as caramel candies and dried fruits

## How to Test Your Food

Foods that you can easily break apart with the side of a fork or spoon are considered safe to eat on the Level 7 Regular Easy to Chew diet. To make sure the food is soft enough to eat, use the IDDSI fork pressure test.

The IDDSI fork pressure test: Using your thumb, press down on the food item with a fork until the coloring of your nail turns white. The food passes the test when it is completely squashed and does not go back to its original shape.

### Tips

- Choose foods that are moist, soft, tender, and easy to chew.
- Cook meats in a way that helps make them moist, such as braising, stewing, or baking in liquid until meat is tender. If you find it hard to chew moistened meats, consider chopping the meat into very small pieces.
- Cook vegetables until they are soft and tender. Undercooked and stir fry vegetables may be too hard to chew. Avoid tough, stringy vegetables such as green beans and peas in the pod.
- Choose canned or soft, peeled fresh fruits such as peaches, nectarines, or melon. Avoid fibrous fruits such as pineapple and the fibrous parts of fresh fruit such as the white of orange. You might find it easier to chew canned fruit if you drain the liquid.
- Fruits with high water content such as watermelon may be difficult to chew because the juice separates from the solids in the mouth.
- Soften cereal with liquid. Drain before eating.
- Food piece size is not restricted, cutting foods in smaller and cutting foods into small pieces may be easier to chew. For example:
  - Prepare broths, soups, or chowders with small pieces of meat and vegetables
  - Cut up ingredients in casseroles before cooking
- Reheat foods carefully (30 seconds at a time) so that the food doesn't form a tough crust.

## Foods Recommended and Not Recommended

Food lists are based on the International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI) Framework. Use IDDSI testing methods to confirm your foods and drinks are safe.

The following table is not a complete list of foods recommended. Other foods may be OK to eat as long as they meet IDDSI testing requirements.

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods Not Recommended
<b>Grains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ All well-moistened soft, cooked, dry, hot, or cold cereals with excess liquid drained</li><li>▶ All starches including couscous, pasta, quinoa, rice, wild rice, and moist bread dressing (as tolerated)</li><li>▶ Bread, toast, and sandwiches that can be cut or broken apart into smaller pieces with the side of a spoon/fork*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Dry bread, toast, crackers Tough, thick crusty breads such as French bread or baguettes Dry bread dressing Bread with nuts or seeds</li><li>▶ Coarse or dry cereals such as shredded wheat or bran flakes</li><li>▶ Dry cakes, cookies that are chewy, sticky, or very dry</li></ul>

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods Not Recommended
<b>Protein Foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Chop or cut into pieces as needed:</i></li> <li>▶ Prepared, moistened, soft/tender red meat, including beef, pork, or lamb served with gravy or sauce; chop or cut up as needed</li> <li>▶ Prepared, moistened, soft/tender poultry, including chicken or turkey served with gravy or sauce that is chopped or cut up as needed</li> <li>▶ Prepared, moistened, tender seafood, including fish (salmon, herring, and sardines), shrimp, lobster, clams, and scallops served with gravy or sauce</li> <li>▶ Tender, thin sliced deli meats such as bologna, ham, salami (made of meat or poultry) that is cut up or chopped as needed; salad-type sandwich filling</li> <li>▶ Bacon and sausage (as tolerated)</li> <li>▶ Eggs and egg substitutes, prepared in any way you prefer</li> <li>▶ Casseroles with tender, soft ingredients including meat or ground meats served in mildly, moderately, or extremely thick sauce with excess liquid drained</li> <li>▶ Smooth, nut and seed butters, such as peanut butter, almond butter, and sunflower seed butter (as tolerated)</li> <li>▶ Prepared, moistened soy foods, such as tofu or tempeh</li> <li>▶ Prepared, moistened meat alternatives, such as veggie burgers, and sausages based on plant protein</li> <li>▶ Prepared, moistened legumes, such as dried beans, lentils, or peas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Tough, dry, red meats (beef, pork, lamb) or meats with bone and/or gristle</li> <li>▶ Tough, dry poultry (chicken and turkey)</li> <li>▶ Poultry with bone/gristle</li> <li>▶ Tough, dry fish</li> <li>▶ Fish with bones</li> <li>▶ Tough, dry, stringy deli meats, such as pastrami, corned beef</li> <li>▶ Bacon and sausage (if not tolerated)</li> <li>▶ Chunky nut seed butters</li> <li>▶ Whole nuts, such as peanuts and almonds, pistachios</li> <li>▶ Seeds such as sunflower, sesame, and pumpkin seeds</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy and Dairy Alternatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Milk, yogurt (without nuts or coconut), cottage cheese, and soft, not sticky or chewy cheeses</li> <li>▶ Fortified soymilk</li> <li>▶ Cream cheese, sour cream, and whipped topping</li> <li>▶ Pudding, custard</li> <li>▶ Frozen desserts such as ice cream, sherbet, malts, and frozen yogurt*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Yogurt with nuts or coconut</li> <li>▶ Hard or dry cheese</li> <li>▶ Chunks of cheese that are hard to eat because they are very sticky or very chewy</li> <li>▶ Cream cheese spread with coarse, difficult to chew, or chunky additives like nuts or pineapple</li> </ul>

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods Not Recommended
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All cooked, tender vegetables soft enough to be broken apart with the side of a spoon/fork</li> <li>▶ All tender potatoes soft enough to be broken apart with the side of a spoon/fork</li> <li>▶ Vegetable juices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All raw vegetables</li> <li>▶ Undercooked vegetables including some stir-fried vegetables</li> <li>▶ Cooked vegetables that are fibrous, tough, or stringy, such as green beans, peapods, and rhubarb</li> <li>▶ Tough, crisp fried vegetables such as potato skins or crisp-fried potatoes</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All canned and cooked fruits, soft enough to be broken apart with the side of a spoon/fork</li> <li>▶ Fruit drained of excess liquid if recommended by clinician</li> <li>▶ Soft, peeled fresh fruits such as peaches, nectarines, kiwi, cantaloupe, honeydew, and seedless watermelon**, ***</li> <li>▶ Soft berries with small seeds (such as strawberries)</li> <li>▶ 100% fruit juice</li> <li>▶ Moist, cooked raisins (in recipes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fresh fruits that are difficult to chew such as apples or pears</li> <li>▶ Stringy, high-pulp fruits such as papaya, pineapple, or mango</li> <li>▶ Fresh fruits with difficult-to-chew peels or skins such as grapes</li> <li>▶ Dried fruits such as prunes, raisins, or apricots</li> <li>▶ Sticky and chewy fruit items such as fruit leather, fruit roll-ups, fruit snacks, dried fruits</li> </ul>
<b>Oils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Olive, peanut, and canola oils</li> <li>▶ Margarines and spreads</li> <li>▶ Salad dressing</li> <li>▶ Butter, gravy, cream sauces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All fats with coarse, difficult to chew, or chunky additives</li> </ul>
<b>Beverages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coffee, tea, water, 100% fruit juice</li> </ul>	
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Prepared foods, including all soups with tender meats, casseroles, baked goods, and snacks made from recommended ingredients</li> <li>▶ All seasonings and sweeteners, including honey, jams, jellies, and preserves</li> <li>▶ Non-chewy candies without nuts, seeds, or coconut; non-sticky, non-gummy candies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nuts, seeds, coconut</li> <li>▶ Candies with nuts, seeds, or coconut</li> <li>▶ Chewing gum</li> <li>▶ Chewy caramel or taffy-style candies and marshmallows</li> <li>▶ Corn chips and potato chips</li> <li>▶ Popcorn and sticky rice cakes</li> </ul>

\* It is OK to eat bread, bread products, sandwiches, and frozen desserts if approved by the clinician. Make sure the clinician says these foods are safe for you before eating.

\*\* Watermelon and other fruits with high water content may be difficult to chew because the juice separates from the solids in the mouth. Be careful when eating these types of fruits.

\*\*\* Take care to not accidentally ingest hard seeds from fruit.

## Level 7 Regular Easy-to-Chew Sample 1-Day Menu

Meal	Menu
<b>Breakfast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1 cup dry cereal well-moistened with:</li><li>■ ½ cup 1% milk</li><li>■ 1 egg, scrambled</li><li>■ 1 moist biscuit</li><li>■ 2 teaspoons butter</li><li>■ ½ cup mandarin oranges, drained</li><li>■ ½ cup 1% milk</li></ul>
<b>Lunch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1 cup moist beef stew with soft, tender chunks of meat and vegetables served over:</li><li>■ ½ cup pasta, cooked</li><li>■ ½ cup cottage cheese topped with:</li><li>■ ½ cup canned fruit cocktail, drained</li><li>■ ½ cup cinnamon custard</li><li>■ 1 cup 1% milk</li></ul>
<b>Evening Meal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 3 ounces chicken, moist, soft, tender</li><li>■ 2 tablespoons gravy</li><li>■ ½ cup cooked potatoes, soft</li><li>■ ½ cup cooked carrots</li><li>■ ½ bread dressing, not sticky</li><li>■ ½ cup canned diced peaches, drained</li><li>■ 1 cup 1% milk</li></ul>
<b>Snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ ½ cup vanilla yogurt</li></ul>

