

Client Name:

Date:

RDN/NDTR:

Email:

Phone:

# IDDSI Level 6 Soft and Bite-Sized Nutrition Therapy

A level 6 soft and bite-sized diet is prescribed to patients who are unable to safely bite off pieces of food but they are able to chew the food into pieces that can be swallowed.

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help with figuring out how to enjoy favorite foods while following this diet.

## How to Test the Food

Foods that can easily break apart with the side of a fork or spoon are considered safe to eat on the Level 6 Soft and Bite-Sized diet. To make sure the food is soft enough to eat, use the IDDSI fork pressure test.

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

Make sure the food is the right size. Food particles should be no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm.

All foods must meet IDDSI food test requirements. Cooking method and serving temperature might affect texture. Ask the clinician for additional resources.

## Tips

- Cut all food into pieces smaller than 8 mm × 8 mm.
- Foods should be soft, tender, and moist so they are easier to chew and swallow.
- Foods that have “mixed-consistency” can separate into solids and thin liquids or multiple textures. Mixed-consistency foods may be OK to eat if prepared in a safe way. Strain the liquid from these foods before serving or blend together to make one consistency. Examples:
  - Cereal with milk drained
  - Canned fruit served with juice or syrup drained
  - Soups, stews, and some casseroles, served with thick enough broth, gravy, or sauce based on testing methods
  - Watermelon, which is considered a juicy food “where juice separates from solid” and is excluded in most IDDSI diet levels
- Moist foods are easier to swallow. To keep foods moist, add small amounts of gravy, sauce, vegetable juice or cooking water, milk, or half-and-half. Avoid large chunks of food or hard foods that need to be chewed thoroughly.
- Avoid very sticky, chewy or crunchy foods. See Foods Not Recommended list for examples.
- Monitor foods while reheating to make sure they don’t form a tough outer 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 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 the IDDSI food testing requirements.

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods Not Recommended
<b>Grains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All well-moistened, soft cooked hot cereals with lumps no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces, drained and served without excess liquid.</li> <li>▶ Cold cereal (if approved by the clinician) with lumps no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm, softened, drained and served without excess liquid.</li> <li>▶ Pregelled, soaked bread that is consistently moist throughout, with no sections that have hardened.</li> <li>▶ Starches including pasta, potato, and rice dishes with pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8mm. Not sticky.</li> <li>▶ Couscous, quinoa, or rice held together with smooth, thick sauce that keeps rice from separating into individual grains.</li> <li>▶ Soft, cooked pasta dishes with pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm; sauce does not separate from pasta.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Dry bread, toast, crackers, biscuits, muffins, pancakes, waffles, bread dressing</li> <li>▶ Grainy, sticky, or glutinous rice</li> </ul>
<b>Protein Foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A note about red meat, pork, lamb, chicken, and casseroles: If food cannot be served soft at 8 mm × 8 mm, instead mince the food and serve moist by following Level 5, Minced &amp; Moist guidelines.</li> <li>▶ Cooked, moist, soft, and tender red meat, including beef, pork, or lamb, chopped no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces.</li> <li>▶ Cooked, moist, soft, and tender poultry, including skinless chicken or turkey, chopped no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces.</li> <li>▶ Cooked, moist, soft, and tender seafood, including fish (salmon, herring, and sardines), shrimp, lobster, clams, and scallops; these foods should be soft enough to break and serve in pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces.</li> <li>▶ Eggs and egg substitutes, no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces.</li> <li>▶ Casseroles with soft chunks of meat, ground meats, or tender meats no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces served in mildly, moderately, or extremely thick sauce with excess liquid drained</li> <li>▶ Moistened soy foods, such as tofu or tempeh; soft enough to break and serve in pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces</li> <li>▶ Moistened meat alternatives, such as veggie burgers, and sausages based on plant protein; chopped no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces</li> <li>▶ Sausages without skin cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm or ground</li> <li>▶ Moistened legumes with soft skins/shells, such as dried beans, lentils, or peas no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces and without tough skins. If incorporated into a recipe, must pass IDDSI testing methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Protein foods in sizes larger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces</li> <li>▶ Chicken, turkey and fish with skin on or with bones</li> <li>▶ Sausage skin</li> <li>▶ Protein foods served with undrained thin liquids, such as beef stew, chowders, and casseroles</li> <li>▶ Fish with skin on or with bones; fish that cannot break into small pieces (8 mm × 8mm)</li> <li>▶ Fried eggs</li> <li>▶ Whole nuts and seeds (including peanuts and almonds), pistachios, and sunflower seeds</li> <li>▶ Nut and seed butters, unless they are smooth and used in a recipe that meets testing guidelines</li> <li>▶ Dried beans, lentils or peas that have hard shells or skins; or do not meet size expectations or do not pass IDDSI testing methods.</li> </ul>

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods Not Recommended
<b>Dairy and Dairy Alternatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Yogurt (without nuts or coconut), cottage cheese with lumps no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm, and soft cheeses that aren't sticky or chewy</li> <li>▶ Cream cheese, sour cream, pudding, custard and whipped topping</li> <li>▶ Frozen desserts such as ice cream, sherbet, malts, and frozen yogurt if recommended by the clinician</li> <li>▶ Milk, fortified soymilk, fortified nut milk in the liquid consistency recommended by the clinician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Yogurt with nuts or coconut</li> <li>▶ Hard or dry cheese, cheeses in pieces bigger than 8 mm × 8 mm pieces, and cheese that is sticky or chewy</li> <li>▶ Frozen desserts such as, ice cream, sherbet, malts, and frozen yogurt, unless approved by the clinician</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Soft cooked vegetables and starchy vegetables that are served steamed or boiled in pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li> <li>▶ Peas, creamed peas and creamed corn with soft skins and free of husks; may be blended or incorporated into IDDSI safe stews and soups. If incorporated into a recipe, must pass IDDSI testing methods.</li> <li>▶ Vegetable juices must meet the IDDSI liquid consistency recommended by the clinician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All raw vegetables</li> <li>▶ Stir-fried or fried vegetables</li> <li>▶ Undercooked vegetables</li> <li>▶ Peas with tough skins or shells</li> <li>▶ Corn with husks</li> <li>▶ Cooked vegetables that are fibrous, tough, firm, or stringy such as green beans, peapods, and rhubarb</li> <li>▶ Sticky or crunchy potatoes such as mashed potatoes and potato casseroles with hard tops</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Canned and cooked fruits, drained of excess juices, served cut up into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm or served minced or mashed.</li> <li>▶ Soft, peeled fresh fruits such as peaches, nectarines, kiwi, cantaloupe, and soft berries with small seeds (for example, strawberries), cut up into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm or serve minced or mashed</li> <li>▶ 100% fruit juice in the liquid consistency recommended by the clinician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fresh fruits that are difficult to chew, have peels/skins/pits/seeds that are difficult to chew, or are hard and crunchy such as apples, grapes, or pears</li> <li>▶ Stringy, high-pulp fruits, fibrous fruits such as papaya, pineapple, rhubarb or mango</li> <li>▶ Fruits with high water content or juice that separates from solid in the mouth such as melons (unless assessed as safe by the clinician)</li> <li>▶ Round or long fruits such as grapes</li> <li>▶ Uncooked dried fruits such as prunes, raisins or apricots</li> <li>▶ Fruit leather, fruit roll-ups, fruit snacks, dried fruits</li> </ul>
<b>Beverages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coffee, tea, water, 100% fruit juice, and nutritional supplements in the liquid consistency recommended by the clinician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Liquid consistencies other than the liquid consistency recommended by the clinician</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Prepared foods, including casseroles, salads, baked goods, and snacks made from recommended ingredients and served in 8 mm × 8 mm pieces</li> <li>▶ Pureed strained soups or soups with small soft pieces (8 mm × 8 mm) that meet testing guidelines</li> <li>▶ All seasonings and sweeteners, including honey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Soups, stews, casseroles, and prepared foods that have pieces bigger than 8 mm × 8mm and that contain liquids that separate from the solid foods</li> <li>▶ Jelly</li> </ul>

# Level 6 Soft and Bite-Sized 1200-Calorie Sample 1-Day Menu

Meal	Menu
<b>Breakfast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1 scrambled egg, cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 1 teaspoon olive oil, for scrambled eggs</li><li>■ 1 cup smooth cream of wheat made with milk, drained and served without excess liquid</li><li>■ 1 teaspoon maple syrup, mixed into cream of wheat</li><li>■ ½ cup canned peaches, drained, cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 1 cup whole milk (in the liquid consistency recommended by your clinician)</li></ul>
<b>Lunch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1 ounce of chicken, cooked, soft, chopped no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 2 tablespoons gravy</li><li>■ ½ cup cooked potatoes, soft, cut into pieces no larger 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 1 teaspoon butter</li><li>■ ½ cup cooked broccoli, soft, cut in pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ ½ cup unsweetened applesauce</li><li>■ 1 cup whole milk (in the liquid consistency recommended by your clinician)</li></ul>
<b>Dinner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1 cup cooked pasta, soft, cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 1 ounce ground beef, cooked, soft, chopped into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ ¼ cup tomato sauce, no seeds</li><li>■ ¼ cup ricotta cheese</li><li>■ ½ cup cooked carrots, soft, cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ ½ cup vanilla pudding</li></ul>

## Level 6 Soft and Bite-Sized 1600-Calorie Sample 1-Day Menu

Meal	Menu
<b>Breakfast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1 scrambled egg, cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 1 teaspoon olive oil, for scrambled eggs</li><li>■ ½ cup smooth yogurt</li><li>■ ½ cup strawberries, cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm, mixed into yogurt</li><li>■ 1 cup 1% milk (in the liquid consistency recommended by your clinician)</li></ul>
<b>Lunch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 3 ounces ground beef, cooked, soft, chopped into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 1 ounce American cheese, melted on beef</li><li>■ 2 slices pregelled, soaked bread</li><li>■ 1 tablespoon ketchup</li><li>■ 1 teaspoon mustard</li><li>■ 1 cup cooked carrots, soft, cut into pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ ½ cup unsweetened applesauce</li></ul>
<b>Dinner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 3 ounces chicken, moist, tender with pieces no larger than 8 mm × 8 mm</li><li>■ 2 tablespoons of gravy</li><li>■ 1 cup mashed potatoes</li><li>■ ½ cup rice, not sticky</li><li>■ 1 teaspoon butter, for rice</li><li>■ 1 cup green beans, cooked, soft, mashed</li><li>■ 1 teaspoon butter, for green beans</li><li>■ 1 cup 1% milk (in the liquid consistency recommended by your clinician)</li></ul>
<b>Snack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ ½ cup vanilla pudding</li><li>■ 1 cup peaches, canned, drained, with pieces no larger than 1.5 × 1.5 cm</li></ul>

# Sample Meal Plan

Use this form to create an individualized meal plan.

**Meal**

**Menu**

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**Breakfast**

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**Lunch**

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**Dinner**

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**Snack**

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**Notes:**