How to eat after jaw surgery
Information for patients and families

What can I eat and drink after jaw surgery?

Eating and drinking can be painful after jaw surgery. Chewing regular food is harder because of the wires, metal plates or elastics in your mouth. Chewing food after surgery can be painful and slow down your healing.

After surgery, it is very important to eat and drink enough to help you heal. You will need to follow a liquid or pureed diet until your jaw has healed. This usually takes about 4 to 6 weeks. Your surgeon will tell you when you can eat regular food.

How do I make pureed food?

How to puree food in a blender, food processor or food mill:

1. Cut your food into small pieces.
2. Put small amounts of cut-up food into your blender (½ cup to start). When it is smooth, add small amounts of more food.
3. While blending, slowly add liquid to the food (such as milk, cream, broth, fruit juice, water or gravy). Add liquid any time the blended food starts to get too thick.
4. Keep blending until the food is smooth and does not have any lumps.

If you do not have a blender, food processor or food mill, you can use a wire mesh or strainer.
Here is how to puree foods using a **wire mesh or strainer**:

1. Use a spoon to press well-cooked foods (such as cooked vegetables, fish, eggs and canned fruits) through the strainer.

2. If the food still has lumps or is stringy, press it through the strainer again until it is smooth. It should not be dry. If you need to make the food moist, add more liquid.

3. Before you eat, make sure there are no skins, seeds or stringy fibres in the food.

**How to store pureed foods**

Pureed foods can grow bacteria faster than regular foods. Use these tips to keep safe:

- Wash and clean cooking tools before you use them.
- After you puree foods, put them in the refrigerator or freezer until you are ready to eat.
- Do not store pureed foods in the refrigerator for more than 2 days.
- You can keep pureed foods in the freezer for 3 to 6 months. It is best to use pureed foods within 3 months. After 6 months, throw away frozen pureed foods.

**Tips on eating pureed foods**

- Freeze your leftovers. Pour pureed food into an ice cube tray, small plastic containers, muffin cups or freezer bags. Thaw frozen meals in the fridge overnight, then reheat when you are ready to eat.
- Buy baby food to save time. Use spices and seasonings to add more flavour. Or mix the baby food with other pureed foods.
- Eat 6 to 8 small meals each day. Make sure you are eating enough to keep your energy and weight up.
- Drink from a cup if you can drink without dribbling.
• Use the 60ml plastic syringe to eat. Place the syringe between the inside of your cheek and your teeth. Your dietitian will help you find the best way to take food and liquid.

• Rinse your mouth with water after you are finished eating. Make sure that no food is left between the wires or elastics

• Check that you are not losing weight. Weigh yourself each week. Watch how your clothes fit. Contact your dietitian or doctor if you lose more than 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) in 2 months.

**Should I drink a supplement?**

You may want to add supplement drinks to your diet. These liquid foods include lots of calories, nutrients, vitamins and minerals. They are an easy and convenient way to get nutrition and to help you maintain your weight. They are a good choice for a snack.

You can buy these drinks at most grocery and drug stores. Some examples are:

• Carnation Breakfast Anytime™
• Boost™, Boost Plus™
• Ensure Plus™, Ensure™

Ask your dietitian about what supplement is best for you.

**What can I do to have regular bowel movements?**

If you have not had a bowel movement in 2 days, you may be constipated. Constipation is common after surgery because of pain medications, not getting enough exercise and eating different foods.

To prevent constipation, make sure that you:

• Drink 6 to 8 cups of liquids a day
• Drink prune juice, pear juice or cherry juice
• Choose high-fibre cereals that you can puree
• Use a fibre supplement such as Benefibre or Metamucil™
• Be active. Walking every day will keep your bowels moving.
Examples of pureed foods

On a pureed food diet, there are lots of foods that you can eat. Here are some foods that are ready to eat or can easily be pureed.

Grains, breads and cereals
- Cream of wheat, oatmeal, congee
- Softened cereal such as Bran Flakes™
- Bread pudding, creamy rice pudding
- Pureed small shaped pastas such as stars or pastina

Fruits and vegetables
- Pureed canned or cooked fruits (no skins or seeds)
- Applesauce
- Pureed cut-up ripe banana, peach, pear, nectarine, avocado or melon (no skins or seeds)
- Pureed well-cooked vegetables (no skins) such as peas, carrots, green or yellow beans, beets, broccoli, cauliflower
- Mashed squash, potato, yam, sweet potato

Meats and alternatives
- Pureed casseroles (with plenty of gravy, sauce or broth to make the food moist)
- Pureed meats such as chicken, turkey or fish without bones (poached or baked in foil)
- Blended stews and soups
- Pureed cooked lentils, beans, split peas, legumes
- Pureed diced tofu
- Pureed soft boiled or scrambled eggs
- Smooth peanut butter, nut spreads such as Nutella™

Fats or sauces
- Gravy, margarine, butter, cream sauces
Milk and milk products
- Cottage cheese, moist cheeses like Minigo™
- Yogurt or sour cream
- Whipped cream cheese
- Creamy dips such as hummus, tzatziki, baba ganoush, red pepper, olive tapenade. Look at the deli counter for more choices.

Desserts and snacks
- Smooth custards, ice-cream, sherbets, pudding, Jell-O™, fruit smoothies, milkshakes, mousse

Sample meal plan

Breakfast
- Prune juice
- Cream of wheat® with cream and brown sugar
- Yogurt
- Pureed bananas

Snack
- Milk
- Applesauce

Lunch
- Juice
- Pureed meat
- Pureed canned vegetables
- Mashed potatoes
- Pureed canned fruit

Snack
- 1 bottle of a nutritional supplement drink.
  Talk to your dietitian about which product is right for you.

Dinner
- Pureed pasta with sauce
- Butternut squash soup
- Milk

Snack
- Pudding
Where to find more information

For recipes and more resources go to
www.Unlockfood.ca

To order a pureed foods handbook go to
www.dinnerthroughastraw.net

Get an online jaw surgery cookbook at
https://profilesofs.com/jaw-surgery-cookbook

To speak with a registered dietitian call Telehealth Ontario
1-866-797-0000

Dietitian _________________________________

Phone number 416-864-6060 Ext. ____________

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