

“HOW TO” TIPS ON FOOD PREPARATION FOR GROUND & PUREED DIETS

Processing food to a ground or pureed texture may be difficult at times. The following suggestions are meant to help you become expert at preparing the prescribed special food textures.

Although these tips are not meant to cover every food item, they do present general recommendations for major food groups, or problem foods. Some specific examples are also listed.

These “how to” tips are meant to bring out the flavor, color, and “good looks” of the food. Following these tips will also help to maintain nutrient density.

Unless indicated otherwise, only prepare/process one food item at a time. Putting several different foods together destroys flavor and color. When using a food processor for ground diet preparation, only run it long enough to break foods into the desired texture: particles that are 1/8"-1/4". For a pureed diet the desired texture is smooth like pudding or mashed potatoes without lumps. Processing longer than necessary may result in a texture that may not be as safe for the consumer. When processing several items in succession, rinse the bowl of the processor with hot water between each item.

Note: For several of the food items, a “stabilizer” is recommended as one of the ingredients. A stabilizer adds “stickiness” or cohesiveness to a food so the texture is denser - like mashed potatoes - rather than dry like rice. Sample stabilizers include instant food thickener, mashed potato flakes, or dried bread crumbs.

Let’s try to provide each of our consumers with food that is as attractive, delicious and as safe as it can possibly be!!!

Ideas and inspiration for the above modified texture preparation suggestions were based in part on the following sources: [3-Dimensions of Puree Diets](#) from Anderson Benner Productions, Sugar Land, TX, and [Puree Pizzazz](#) from Nutrition Consulting Services, Inc. Akron, Ohio.

GROUND DIET PREPARATION SUGGESTIONS

FOOD ITEM	GROUND TEXTURE GOAL	“HOW TO” TIPS FOR GROUND DIET
Meats Poultry	Like moist cooked hamburger or ground turkey	If meat is very dry, add 1 tsp. Vegetable oil or liquid margarine per 3 oz serving. You may need to add 1-2 Tbsp. Stabilizer (bread crumbs or mashed potato flakes) to obtain moist, crumbled ground meat texture. Grind using a pulsing action.
Hot Dogs	Same as meats and poultry	Use skinless variety. Grind using a pulsing action.
Fish	Same as meats and poultry	Because fish is usually very dry, add 1-2 tsp. Vegetable oil, mayonnaise, tartar sauce, or lemon juice for moisture.
Cheese	Shredded or grated; “squeeze” or cheese sauce	Examples: Melted or grated mozzarella on top of casserole or pizza. Liquid spread on gelled crackers or bread. CAUTION! Melted does not mean rubbery!
Peanut Butter Sandwich	Cannot be met	DO NOT PROVIDE
Other Sandwich Fillings	Same as meats and poultry; cheese	Grind all meat or sandwich fillings using pulsing action. Add 1-2 tsp. mayonnaise or mustard to plain meats for moisture. Use a knife to cut sandwiches into at least 16 pieces after putting soft filling on bread. Bread may be gelled.
Bread	DO NOT PROVIDE bread or crackers with nuts, seeds, and similar hard additions.	Does not grind well. Soften bread with gelatin solution. May need to remove crusts. Use ground, moist fillings. See sandwiches above.
Noodles Pasta	Soft, bite size, fork mashable.	Cook well. Long or very thick noodles will need to be cut before serving. The side of a fork can be used to cut if pasta is cooked thoroughly.
Rice	Soft, well cooked. Does not need to be processed.	If rice is very dry, add fluid such as gravy, sauce or margarine to moisten, but avoid making it “soupy.”
Cooked Vegetables	Soft, well cooked, pea sized.	If well cooked the side of a fork will cut into smaller pieces. Add 1-2 tsp. water and 1-2 tsp. stabilizer for cohesiveness.
Fresh Vegetables	Shredded or grated, moist.	Remove tough skins, seeds, membranes, strings. Avoid raw celery. May steam or cook before grinding. May add salad dressing or mayonnaise for cohesiveness.
Fruits	Soft and fork-mashed to applesauce-like texture.	Canned: May mash with a fork. Soften dried fruit before grinding. Fresh: Choose soft, ripe, juicy fruit without skin (melon, banana, peaches, plums); grind quickly with pulsing action.
Grapes	Like crushed pineapple.	Remove skin, and grind, or avoid.
Oranges, grapefruit	Remove all of white membrane and skin.	Grind. Add 1-2 Tbsp. Stabilizer.
Bananas	Soft but not mushy.	Choose ripe fruit that is soft enough to mash with a fork. Bananas will turn brown quickly after being cut, mashed and exposed to the air. To stop browning, add ½ tsp. lemon juice to each ½ c. of mashed banana. Orange juice is not a good substitute.

PUREED DIET PREPARATION SUGGESTIONS

FOOD ITEM	PUREED TEXTURE GOAL	“HOW TO” TIPS FOR PUREED DIET
Sandwiches	Moist, mashed potatoes.	<i>Examples:</i> 1. Puree sandwich filling, and place between pieces of gelled bread. (See Bread below for gelling directions.) 2. Puree entire sandwich (bread plus contents together).
Peanut butter sandwiches	None.	DO NOT PROVIDE.
Meats, poultry	Like soft, mashed potatoes	If meat is very dry or stringy, add 1 tsp. Vegetable oil or liquid margarine per 3 oz. serving. You may also need to add 1-2 Tbsp. stabilizer (bread crumbs or potato flakes) to reach a smooth consistency. Meats tend to require longer processing to achieve mashed potato texture. <i>Example:</i> To each 3 oz. portion of roast beef add 1 tsp. vegetable oil and 1 Tbsp. of the following to thicken: - Instant food thickener - Instant mashed potato flakes - Dried bread crumbs Processed meats (bologna, hot dogs, salami) may also need 1-2 tsp. water added. Ham can be very dry, and may need 2-4 Tbsp. water per 3 oz. serving.
Fish	Same as meats & poultry	Because fish is usually very dry, add 1-2 tsp. vegetable oil, mayonnaise, tartar sauce, or lemon juice for moisture.
Cheese	Finely grated; like grated parmesan.	Sprinkle grated parmesan on pureed spaghetti sauce over pureed noodles. Finely shredded cheddar cheese mixed in a pureed tuna casserole. Use cheese sauce or “squeeze cheese” instead of hard cheese for flavor on sandwiches or on gelled crackers for a snack. Puree cottage cheese (not the dry curd type) to smooth texture.
Bread	Moist, mashed potatoes.	Bread products do not puree well. <i>Alternatives:</i> 1. Substitute ½ c. potatoes or noodles (soft, cooked, mashed) for each slice of bread. 2. Gelled bread, crackers, muffins, other bread products: Make mixture of 1 cup juice, broth, water, syrup (any combination), and 1 ½ tsp. unflavored gelatin powder. Pour 2-4 Tbsp. gelatin/liquid mixture over each slice of bread or other product. Cover (with lid not touching bread). Chill for at least two hours. Result: “Gelled” bread! Can be eaten with a spoon. 3. Menu calls for 1 sl. toast. Substitute ½ c. oatmeal or other hot cereal. 4. Menu calls for 1 pc. 2" x2" cornbread. Gel cornbread, or substitute ½ c. polenta or cornmeal mush.
Noodles (Pasta)	Soft, moist, mashed potatoes	Puree when hot. Be sure that product is very well cooked and mash with a fork. Puree separately from accompanying food item. May add 1 tsp. margarine per ½ c. portion; will also need 2-3 Tbsp. water due to stickiness of pasta. <i>Example:</i> Beef Stroganoff: Puree noodles. Then puree meat sauce separately and spoon over pureed noodles. This promotes the appearance of “normal” food.

FOOD ITEM	PUREED TEXTURE GOAL	“HOW TO” TIPS FOR PUREED DIET
Rice	Very soft	<p>Does not usually puree well; tiny, hard particles will remain that some can't tolerate. Be sure that rice is very well cooked and mash with a fork.</p> <p><i>Alternatives:</i> For each ½ c. of rice on menu, substitute ½ c. of quick cooking rice cereal.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Rice/chicken casserole</p> <p>Instead of rice, prepare ½ c. of rice cereal. Flavor rice cereal with 1 tsp margarine and 1 to 2 Tbsp. of broth or gravy.</p> <p>Puree chicken separately with 1 tsp. margarine and 1 tsp. bread crumbs. Spread pureed chicken over flavored rice cereal for appearance and flavor similar to non-pureed chicken on rice.</p>
Vegetables	Soft, well cooked. Similar to soft, mashed potatoes.	<p>“Starchy” and “Watery” vegetables puree differently, and require different preparation.</p> <p>1. “Starchy” (root, tuber) vegetables: (Examples: Potatoes, squash, carrots, yams). To each ½ c. portion add 1 tsp. margarine. If consistency is quite stiff and/or dry, add 1 Tbsp. or more of broth, gravy or sauce for softer texture.</p> <p>2. “Watery” (leaf, stem, flower) vegetables: (Examples: Green beans, tomatoes, lettuce, spinach and other greens). To each portion add 1-2 tsp. mashed potato flakes or bread crumbs as a stabilizer (to add thickness or “body”), and 1-2 tsp. water.</p> <p>3. Lettuce: To make lettuce salad or spread, puree 1 c. raw lettuce and other leafy salad ingredients. Add ½-1 Tbsp. stabilizer and either 1 ½ tsp. mayonnaise or neutral colored salad dressing such as Italian or Ranch dressing. May add green food coloring. Can be served as a vegetable or spread on bread for a sandwich.</p>
FOOD ITEM	PUREED TEXTURE GOAL	“HOW TO” TIPS FOR PUREED DIET
Fruits	Soft, mash with a fork or applesauce-like.	<p>Most canned fruits are watery and require a stabilizer. Others have more body and do not require any additions.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All canned fruits (except applesauce): To each ½ c. portion add 1-2 Tbsp. potato flakes or other stabilizer. - Fresh fruit must be soft, ripe and peeled before processing. Use melon, peaches, plums, nectarines, strawberries in season. Add 1-2 Tbsp. stabilizer, depending on water content of fruit. - Molded salad: Substitute pureed fruit for part of the water when preparing a fruit/gelatin salad.
Grapes	None	DO NOT PROVIDE
Oranges, grapefruit	None	DO NOT PROVIDE
Bananas	Fork mashable, soft.	To stop browning, add ½ tsp. lemon juice to each ½ c. of mashed banana. Orange juice is not a good substitute.