Difficulty Swallowing
Patient Education

- Follow instructions for any special eating techniques given to you by a speech therapist.
- Try to drink 6 to 8 cups of fluid each day and thicken the fluid to the right consistency - if necessary.
- Report right away to your doctor any coughing or choking while eating, especially if it is new or if you also have a fever.
- Use liquid nutrition drinks (ie: Ensure, Boost, etc) if you are unable to eat enough foods.
- Select from the following thickening products if necessary &/or helpful:
  - Gelatin – Can be used to form a soft gel with cakes, cookies, crackers, sandwiches, pureed fruits, and other cold foods. Mix 1 tablespoon unflavored gelatin until dissolved in 2 cups liquid and pour over food. Allow food to sit until it is saturated.
  - Commercial thickeners – Available in many drug stores. Follow the instructions on the label.
  - Pureed vegetables – Useful for soups but can alter the flavor.
  - Instant potatoes – Useful in soups, but can alter the flavor.
  - Baby rice cereal – Useful when a very thick product is needed.
  - Tapioca, flour, cornstarch – Useful to thicken liquids to different consistencies, but needs to be cooked.

Food List / Sources:

**Pureed Diet:** as tolerated

- High Protein: Yogurt without fruit, cottage cheese, sour cream, pureed meat/poultry/fish, pureed casserole, soft scrambled eggs.
- Breads, etc: Cooked cereals (Cream of Wheat or Rice, Oatmeal), pureed pasta/rice, “slurried” breads = a thickened liquid poured over bread to make it easier to swallow.
- Fruits/Vegies: Pureed fruit & vegetables without seeds and skins, mashed potatoes.
- Misc: Custard, pudding, syrups, honey, butter/margarine, spices to taste, “slurried” cakes.

**Mechanical Soft Diet:** as tolerated

- High Protein: Yogurt, cheeses, sour cream, all eggs, ground meats and ground meat casserole, fish, sandwiches made with ground meats or spreads.
- Breads, etc: Soft breads, graham crackers, cookies without nuts or dried fruit, soft cold cereals in milk, pancakes, waffles, pasta, rice.
- Fruit/Vegies: Bananas, canned fruit, soft well-cooked or pureed vegetables
- Misc: Custard, pudding, soft cakes and cookies, syrups, honey, butter/margarine, spices to taste. Ice cream, sherbet, flavored gelatin – also okay, unless restricted by a speech therapist.

If thin liquids are recommended for you, select from the following: water, coffee, tea, soft drinks, nutrition drinks,
Italian ice, sherbet, broth, thin cream soups.

If thick liquids are recommended for you, select from the following: buttermilk, eggnog, milkshakes, yogurt shakes, ice cream shakes or using a thickening agent.

Adapted from: The American Dietetic Association
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