

# Minced Diet

## What is a minced diet?

A minced diet is needed if you have problems swallowing or chewing. This can happen for many reasons such as mouth pain, poorly-fitting dentures or missing teeth. Children going through tooth development may also have difficulties chewing or swallowing.

A minced diet requires little chewing. Foods are moist and cohesive with no water separation. On a minced diet you may eat foods that are finely chopped, grated, ground, or mashed to a size that is less than ½ cm (about ¼ inch). Some foods can be eaten whole such as soft, moist bread, buttered toast, or soft sandwiches with minced fillings.

Example of ½ cm (¼ inch) of minced food:

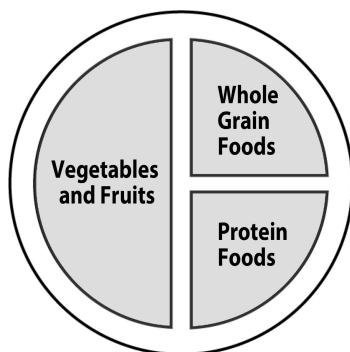
Some foods, such as cottage cheese, are naturally this texture and size.

Some foods need to be pureed to be safe on a minced diet. Pureed foods are soft, moist, and smooth. They hold together and have the look and texture of a pudding or mousse. Pureed foods are not lumpy, thin, or runny.

## Eating well

Canada's Food Guide recommends eating a variety of healthy foods every day. This includes:

- Having plenty of vegetables and fruits
- Choosing whole grain foods
- Eating protein foods



## Grain foods

### Foods to choose:

- cooked cereals (Cream of Wheat®, cornmeal, oat bran, oatmeal)
- soft, moist bread, buttered toast, or buns
- soft, moist baked items (biscuits, muffins)
- French toast, pancakes, or waffles, served with applesauce or syrup to moisten
- barley, couscous, rice, pureed or in a casserole
- minced or bite-sized pasta (elbow macaroni, small shells), cooked until very soft and served in a sauce or casserole
- bread pudding, or soft and moist bread stuffing, (without coconut, dried fruit, nuts, seeds, or any hard particles)
- soda crackers softened, such as soda crackers in soup
- soft cereal bars, such as Nutri-Grain® bars
- ground flax seeds or wheat bran, stirred into cereals

### Foods that need to be pureed:

- If pureed bread products are needed, see the handout *Pureed Bread Products*.

### Foods to avoid:

- all cold cereals
- dry, crumbly, crusty, or chewy breads (bagels, bread sticks, crusty buns, dry muffins, French bread, tortillas)
- cereals or grain products with chocolate chips, coconut, dried fruit, nuts, seeds, whole flax seed, or any hard ingredients
- dry, loose barley, couscous, or rice (brown, fried, steamed, wild)
- hard crackers, croutons, or rice cakes such as crisp bread or Melba toast
- hard or chewy granola and granola bars
- dry pizza crust, such as thin crust pizza

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## Vegetables and fruits

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### Foods to choose:

- smooth mashed potatoes, other minced potato side dishes (minced baked potato with no skin, minced potato salad)
- canned cream corn without whole corn kernels
- applesauce, fruit sauces, or tomato sauce
- mashed ripe banana

### Foods that need to be minced:

- soft cooked or canned vegetables
- soft fresh, canned, or frozen fruits (kiwi, melons, strawberries)
- jellied salad with minced vegetables and fruits

### Foods that need to be pureed:

- soups with pieces of grains, meat, pasta, or vegetables
- broccoli, cooked peas, or kernel corn
- fresh fruit mixed into a smoothie
- stewed pitted prunes

### Foods to avoid:

- all raw vegetables and salads
- cooked vegetables that are rubbery, not soft or don't mince well (Brussels sprouts, cabbage, celery, lima beans)
- crispy dry French fries, crunchy hash browns, or potato skins
- whole kernel corn
- canned, frozen, or fresh fruits with tough membranes, skins, or hard seeds that don't mince well (citrus fruits, raspberries, whole grapes)
- dried fruit (coconut, cranberries, raisins)
- pineapple, all types

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## Protein foods

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### Foods to choose:

- milk: plain or flavoured
- buttermilk, milkshakes, or fortified soy beverages
- smooth yogurt or fruit yogurt with small soft pieces of fruit
- soft cheese, such as cottage cheese, processed cheese slices, or ricotta cheese

- grated cheese or cheese used as an ingredient in any allowed foods
- minced or mashed, soft tofu/soy protein
- minced or mashed, beans, lentils, peas, or dishes made with allowed ingredients (minced bean salad)
- smooth nut butters mixed into allowed foods (peanut butter smoothie)
- cooked scrambled eggs or egg substitutes
- minced or finely mashed, hard cooked, or poached eggs, omelets, or quiche
- minced, moist meat or poultry with smooth sauces or gravy
- minced, tender boneless flaked fish, served with sauces or gravy to moisten
- minced, canned fish with bones removed (canned salmon with mashed bones is allowed)
- sandwiches with salad-type or finely minced fillings on regular moist bread without lettuce or raw vegetables
- meat entrees, made from meat that easily breaks apart (meatballs, meatloaf, shepherd's pie)
- minced, processed meats (deli-style meats, luncheon meats, sausages and wieners without the casing)
- blended soups

### Foods to avoid:

- yogurt with hard fruit pieces, granola, nuts, or seeds
- hard cheese, sliced or cubed
- crispy melted stringy cheese topping (for example, on top of casserole)
- nut butters, smooth or crunchy spread on foods
- nuts or seeds in any form (except smooth nut butters as an ingredient in allowed foods)
- dry or tough meat or poultry (bacon, beef jerky)
- breaded, battered, or deep-fried fish, meat, or poultry, even if minced
- canned fish that contains bones
- meat in casings (sausages, wieners, garlic sausage), even if minced
- hamburgers or wieners in a bun

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## Desserts and snacks

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### Foods to choose:

- ice cream, Popsicles<sup>®</sup>, sherbet, soy frozen desserts, or frozen yogurt
- smooth custards, milk pudding, mousse, rice pudding, or tapioca pudding
- soft baked desserts (cream or pumpkin pies, moist cakes) made with allowed foods
- soft, moist, or easy to break cookies (digestive biscuits)
- jellied desserts

### Foods to avoid:

- custards or puddings with large pieces of dried fruit, nuts, or seeds
- hard cookies or other baked desserts with chocolate chips, dried fruit (coconut, cranberries, raisins), nuts, or seeds
- desserts with crispy, dry, or hard crusts
- chips, nachos, popcorn, or pretzels

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## Condiments and sauces

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### Foods to choose (can be added to allowed foods):

- butter, soft margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, sour cream, or vegetable oils
- condiments that are smooth or have small pieces, such as BBQ sauce, horseradish, ketchup, mustard, or relish
- creamers or whipping cream
- smooth gravies or sauces, such as cheese sauce, hollandaise, or white sauce
- cream cheese or processed cheese spreads, added to or thinly spread on allowed foods
- smooth honey, jam, jelly, or syrup, added to or thinly spread on allowed foods
- all sugars and sugar substitutes

### Foods to avoid:

- sauces with larger pieces, such as chutney, cranberry sauce, or salsa
- gravies, sauces, or spreads with hard particles or seeds
- jams with seeds or marmalades with large pieces of fruit
- olives or pickles

## Making minced food

- Some foods may be soft enough to mince with a fork, pastry blender, or potato masher.
- Foods that are minced should be less than ½ cm (about ¼ inch).
- You can mince harder food with a mini chopper, blender, or a food processor.

Ask your dietitian if you need more information.



### Vegetables and fruits

1. Drain vegetables or fruits before mincing.
2. Cut into small cubes or pieces.
3. Chop or mash until you have small pieces that are the same size.

### Meat

1. Cut meats into small cubes or pieces.
2. Use a mini chopper, blender, or food processor, if needed.
3. Chop or mash until you have small pieces that are the same size.
4. You may need to add extra liquid to make your minced meat moist.
5. Add 1 Tbsp (15 mL) of liquid at a time.
6. Liquids such as broth, melted butter, gravy, sauces, or soft margarine may be used.

Ask your dietitian or swallowing team for more information, if needed.

## Mixed consistency foods

A food with mixed consistency has both thin fluid and solid foods together in one bite.

You may not be able to eat foods with a mixed consistency (in one mouthful) or may have been **told by your healthcare provider** not to eat foods with a mixed consistency.

### Foods to avoid:

- canned fruit in liquid
- cold cereal with milk
- crackers in soup
- juicy fresh vegetables and fruits, such as grapes, oranges, tomatoes, and watermelon (when chewed, these release water, which is a thin fluid)
- fruit in jellied desserts
- ice cream and other frozen desserts with candy, dried fruit, nuts, or other hard pieces
- soups with pieces of solid food such as grains, meat, pasta or vegetables
- stewed fruit
- whole, diced, mashed, stewed, or baked tomatoes, whole cherry tomatoes
- more than 1 oz (30 mL) of gravy or sauce pooling around the food

### Tips:

- Eat smooth, cooked cereal instead of cold cereal with milk.
- Blend or strain soups until smooth. Some soups may need to be thickened to the right consistency as per the directions given by your swallowing team.
- Don't add crackers or bread to your soup.
- Gravy or sauces may need to be thickened.

### Try not to take pills with thin fluids.

Instead, take pills with applesauce, pudding, or yogurt.

If you take fluid medicines, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or your healthcare team about how to take them safely.