

Soft Diet

What is a soft diet?

A soft diet consists of foods that are tender, low in fiber, and easy to digest. It can reduce the amount of work your digestive tract has to do.

It is important to keep in mind that this diet is different from a soft diet recommended to people with chewing and swallowing problems.

A soft diet can help improve digestion if you avoid:

- High-fiber foods such as whole-grain breads and cereals
- Raw fruits and vegetables
- Gas-forming vegetables such as broccoli or cauliflower
- Fried, greasy foods
- Highly seasoned or spicy foods
- Carbonated drinks, alcohol, and caffeine

Why am I on a soft diet?

There are many reasons why you may need to follow a soft diet. Some common reasons are for people who:

- Were previously on a liquid diet and are making the change to solid foods
- Are preparing for surgery
- Are recovering from surgery
- Have stomach pain when eating
- Have abdominal pain or discomfort due to cancer treatments such as chemotherapy or radiation

Tips for your diet

- Cooking and mashing foods will help soften them, making them easier for you to digest.
- Take small bites of food and chew each bite well while eating in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Eat small meals frequently throughout the day to help reduce gas or bloating. After surgery, you may find it easier to eat at least 5 times each day.
- Drink at least eight 8 oz. cups (64 oz.) of fluid each day to stay well hydrated.
- Do not eat for at least two hours before you go to bed.
- You may find that your body is sensitive to a certain food. If you cannot tolerate a food, avoid it for a couple of weeks before you try it again.

Suggestions for your soft diet will be made according to what is appropriate for you. If you have questions, be sure to ask your healthcare team.

Soft Diet Guidelines

Food Group	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Beverages	Water, milk, fruit juice without pulp, vegetable juice, decaffeinated coffee and tea, lemonade, sports drinks (i.e., Gatorade [®]) nutrition supplement drinks	Alcohol, carbonated drinks, caffeine, fruit juice with pulp, prune juice
Soups	Mildly seasoned broth soups and cream soup with noodles, meat, and/or vegetables	Bean, gumbo, split pea, or onion soup; chunky soups or chowders
Meats	Any moist, tender meats, fish, or poultry (lamb, veal, chicken, turkey, tender beef, liver stewed pork) cut into small pieces; eggs (soft boiled); creamy peanut butter	Fried chicken or fish; fish with bones; shellfish; fried, salted, or smoked meats; tough meats with gristle; meats with casings (hot dogs, sausage, kielbasa); cold cuts with whole spices; raw or fried eggs; dried beans; chunky peanut butter; nuts and seeds
Dairy	All milk products, smooth yogurt, mild-flavored cheese, cottage cheese	Yogurt with nuts or seeds, sharp or strong cheeses, cheeses with whole seeds or spices
Fruits	Cooked or canned fruit; applesauce; soft, fresh banana or avocado	All raw fruit (except banana or avocado), dried fruit (dates, raisins), coconut.
Vegetables	Well-cooked or canned vegetables; potatoes (mashed, baked, boiled, or creamed) without skin; tomato sauce	Raw vegetables; gas-forming vegetables (broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, green pepper, onion turnip); whole kernel corn; fried vegetables; French fries; hash browns; sauerkraut
Grains	Refined cooked or ready-to-eat cereal; refined white, wheat, or rye bread, rolls, or crackers; white rice; pasta	Whole-grain breads and cereals (bran, rye with seeds); whole grain pasta; brown or wild rice; granola; breads or rolls with coconut, raisins, nuts, or seeds; multigrain crackers
Fats	Butter, margarine, mild salad dressing, mayonnaise, gravy, cream, cream substitute, sour cream, vegetable oil	Spicy salad dressings, fried foods
Desserts & Sweets	Smooth ice cream, ice milk, or frozen yogurt; sherbet; fruit ices; custards; puddings; cake or cookies made without nuts or coconut; jelly; honey	Desserts or candy made with dried fruit, nuts, coconut; candied fruit; peanut brittle
Seasonings	Ketchup; mustard; cheese, cream, tomato, or white sauces; soy sauce; chopped or ground leaf herbs	Garlic, horseradish, chili powder, whole or seed herbs and spices, barbeque or Cajun seasonings, Worcestershire sauce

Soft Diet Sample Menu

This is a sample diet. There are foods not listed in this sample diet that you can eat as part of a soft diet. Please do not limit your intake to just the foods listed on this menu.

Breakfast	2 egg omelet with cheddar cheese 1 slice of toast 2 tsp grape jelly ½ cup of applesauce 1 cup of 2% milk
Lunch	Turkey and Swiss sandwich on 2 slices of seedless rye bread (with mayonnaise and mustard, if desired) ½ cup canned peaches 1 oz. of baked potato chips 1 cup of apple juice
Afternoon snack	5 oz. vanilla Greek yogurt 1 medium banana 1 cup of water
Dinner	1 cup of penne pasta with meat sauce 1 slice of seedless Italian bread 1 cup well-cooked carrots ½ cup of vanilla ice cream 1 cup of water
Evening snack	2 tbsp. of creamy peanut butter on 4 graham crackers 1 cup of decaffeinated tea

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.