

Food Textures for Children

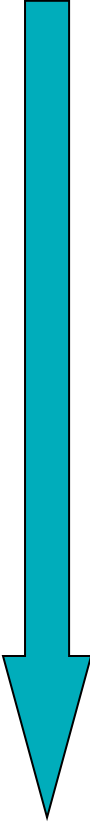
Learning to eat foods with different tastes and textures is a part of developing eating skills. It takes practice to learn eating skills, such as chewing and self feeding. A child's developmental stage or medical condition may affect their eating skills and how quickly they will learn new skills.

Match the texture of foods to the child's eating skill level

Use the table below as a **guide**.

Talk to your child's dietitian or feeding therapist about which food textures to offer your child.

Help your child eat safely. Make sure they are seated and stay with them while they are eating.

	Food texture	Examples of foods
	Pureed  Smooth and moist	- commercially packaged, pureed or strained meat or poultry - pureed raw, canned, or cooked vegetables and fruit
	Mashed or Minced  Mashed with a fork, minced, may have lumps, finely grated	- mashed lentils or chickpeas - mashed cooked carrots - well cooked meat, minced and moist (ground in blender, food mill, or food processor)
	Diced  Soft, moist foods, cut into small pieces	- diced cooked vegetables - soft fruit, without seeds or tough skins - grated apple, cheese, or zucchini - canned flaked chicken, fish, or ham - scrambled eggs
	Finger foods  Soft raw or cooked foods, cut up into bite-sized pieces	- cooked pasta - soft raw or cooked vegetables and fruit - tender meat, poultry, or fish - unsweetened cold cereals that soften in the mouth

Other textures

Meltable or dissolvable solids are foods that start out solid and melt in the mouth, like toddler puffs or rice husks. Meltable solids can help a child begin to learn how to manage pieces of food in their mouth.



Mixed textures are foods that contain liquids and solid food in the same mouthful, like cereal and milk. Mixed textures may be harder to manage than single textures.

Pureed foods for children

Pureed foods are smooth and moist, like pudding or yogurt. Use a mini chopper, food processor, or blender to puree foods. Add liquid to thin as needed.

Sample menu

Breakfast



Peaches, pureed



Smooth hot cereal
made with milk

Snack

Smoothie, made with fruit or vegetable puree, milk, and yogurt, no lumps



Lunch



Soft, cooked carrots,
pureed



Lentil and rice soup,
pureed

Snack

Pudding and fruit or vegetable puree, thin with no lumps



Supper

Smooth
mashed
potatoes



Beef,
pureed

Soft, cooked
peas, pureed

More pureed food ideas

Vegetables and fruits

- Canned or homemade applesauce, smooth with no lumps
- Pureed soft, cooked or canned fruit, such as avocado, banana, mango, papaya, or pear
- Pureed soft, cooked vegetables, such as beets, broccoli, squash, or sweet potato
- Pureed tomato sauce

Grain foods

- Smooth hot cereal, such as baby cereal with iron, cornmeal, or oatmeal
- Pureed soft, cooked pasta or rice

Protein foods

- Pureed baked beans, lentils, or tofu
- Pureed bean or split pea soup
- Store-bought infant beginner or strained meat or poultry
- Pureed cottage, mascarpone, or ricotta cheese
- Pureed homemade or canned cream soup made with milk
- Smooth peanut or nut butter, mixed into hot cereal
- Pureed soft, cooked fish, meat, or poultry
- Smooth or pureed yogurt

Tips

- Puree foods offered at family meals to introduce your child to new flavours.
- Use pureed baby food from a jar or pouch when you are short on time or to add variety. Serve the food on a plate or in a bowl.
- Keep foods separate, on the plate or in the bowl, so your child can taste foods one at a time.
- Add flavour using spices, seasonings, and smooth, thin or pureed sauces.
- Offer a variety of foods from Canada's food guide (Canada.ca/FoodGuide)

Drinks

Depending on your child's age, offer fluids like milk and water, as suggested by your child's dietitian or feeding therapist.

Mashed foods for children

Mashed foods are moist and finely chopped, grated, ground, or minced. Some foods are soft enough to mash with a fork or a potato masher. Use a food grinder, blender, mini chopper, or food processor for harder foods. Add liquid to keep it moist.

Sample menu

Breakfast



Peaches, minced



Oatmeal made with milk

Snack

Hummus (mashed chickpeas) and zucchini, finely grated



Lunch



Green beans, minced



Cornmeal (polenta)



Chicken, minced

Snack

Banana, mashed and cottage cheese



Supper



Congee



Cooked carrots, finely grated



Beef, minced

Drinks

Offer fluids like milk and water, as suggested by your child's dietitian or feeding therapist.

More mashed food ideas

Vegetables and fruits

- Soft, cooked vegetables, such as beets, parsnips, squash, or sweet potato, mashed
- Soft, fresh, or canned fruit, such as avocado, mango, papaya, or pear, mashed
- Vegetable soups, with large pieces mashed, without broth

Grain foods

- Hot cereals, such as baby cereals with iron or oat bran.
- Mashed pancake moistened with applesauce
- Pasta with sauce, mashed or ground
- Congee, cornmeal, mashed and moist

Protein foods

- Mashed bean, lentil, or split pea soup
- Mashed beans, lentils, or tofu
- Cream soup made with milk, mashed
- Custard, rice, tapioca, or thick pudding
- Mashed eggs (hardboiled, omelet, quiche, or scrambled)
- Mashed fish, like canned flaked salmon or light tuna
- Meat or poultry, ground in a food grinder or food processor
- Plain yogurt with mashed fruit
- Ricotta or cottage cheese with mashed fruit or vegetables
- Smoothies, thick with mashed fruit

Tips

- Mash, mince, or grind foods offered at family meals to introduce your child to new flavours.
- Keep foods separate, on the plate or in the bowl, so your child can taste the foods one at a time.
- Use sauces or dips to add moisture and help foods stick together.
- Add flavour using spices, seasonings, and sauces.
- Offer a variety of foods from Canada's food guide. (Canada.ca/FoodGuide)

