

Minced Diet

What is a minced diet?

A minced diet is needed for people who have trouble chewing or swallowing.

On a minced diet you may eat solid foods that are finely chopped, grated, ground, or mashed to a size that is less than ½ cm (¼ inch). All food should be moist with no liquid separation. Some foods, such as cottage cheese, are naturally this texture.

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 should not be lumpy, thin, or runny.

Eating well

Canada's Food Guide recommends choosing a variety of foods from all four food groups each day. This includes: Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, and Meat and Alternatives.

Vegetables and Fruit

Adults (over 18 years) - 7 to 10 servings a day

Teens (14 to 18 years) - 7 to 8 servings a day

Children (2 to 13 years) - 4 to 6 servings a day

Examples of 1 serving **before** mincing:

- 1 medium size vegetable or fruit
- ½ cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables or fruit
- ½ cup (125 mL) vegetable or fruit juice

Foods to choose:

- mashed potato or other minced potato side dishes (such as minced potato salad, minced baked potato with skin removed after baking)
- mashed ripe banana
- vegetable or fruit juice

Foods that need to be minced:

- soft cooked or canned vegetables
- soft cooked, canned, frozen, or fresh fruit
- jellied salad with minced ingredients

Foods that need to be pureed:

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

Foods to avoid:

- cooked vegetables that don't mince well, are rubbery, or not tender (such as cooked broccoli stalk, cabbage, celery)
- all raw vegetables and salads
- potato skins, fried potatoes, and crunchy hash browns
- fruits that don't mince well because of tough skins or hard seeds (such as citrus fruits, raspberries, grapes, berries)
- fresh or dried coconut
- pineapple, all types

Grain Products

Adults (over 18 years) - 6 to 8 servings a day

Teens (14 to 18 years) - 6 to 7 servings a day

Children (2 to 13 years) - 3 to 6 servings a day

Examples of 1 serving **before** mincing:

- ¾ cup (175 mL) hot cereal
- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup (125 mL) cooked pasta or rice

Foods to choose:

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

Foods that need to be pureed:

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

Foods to avoid:

- dry, crumbly, crusty or chewy breads (such as: crusty buns, pitas, bagels, English muffins, dry muffins, tortillas, pizza crust)
- grain products or cereals with chocolate chips, dried fruit, nuts, or seeds (whole or chopped)
- all cold cereals
- dry, loose, rice (steamed, wild, brown, fried)
- hard crackers or croutons (rice cakes, Melba toast, crisp bread, bread sticks)
- hard or chewy granola

Milk and Alternatives

Adults (over 18 years) - 2 to 3 servings a day

Teens (14 to 18 years) - 3 to 4 servings a day

Children (2 to 13 years) - 2 to 4 servings a day

Examples of 1 serving:

- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage
- ¾ cup (175 mL) yogurt
- ½ cup (125 mL) pudding or custard (made with milk or fortified soy beverage)
- 1½ oz (50 gram) cheese
- 1 cup (250 mL) cottage cheese

Foods to choose:

- plain or flavoured milk, buttermilk, fortified soy beverage, or milkshake
- smooth yogurt (vanilla) or those with soft pieces of fruit
- smooth milk pudding or custard
- creamed cottage cheese
- soft cheeses (such as processed cheese) or any grated cheese

Foods to avoid:

- milk products with chocolate chips, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or any hard particles like granola in them
- crispy, melted cheese topping

Meat and Alternatives

Adults (over 18 years) - 2 to 3 servings a day

Teens (14 to 18 years) - 2 to 3 servings a day

Children (2 to 13 years) - 1 to 2 servings a day

Examples of 1 serving **before** mincing:

- 2½ oz (75 g) or ½ cup (125 mL) cooked meat, poultry, or fish
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) peanut or nut butter
- ¾ cup (175 mL) cooked beans or lentils
- ¾ cup (175 mL) tofu

Foods to choose:

- moist casseroles made with allowed ingredients (such as tuna macaroni casserole)
- tender, boneless fish that flakes easily
- canned fish, bones removed or mashed
- smooth nut butters (such as peanut butter) used in cooking
- scrambled eggs or egg substitutes
- blended or strained soups

Foods that need to be minced:

- moist meat and poultry served with smooth sauces or gravies
- ground meat formed into another product that is tender (such as shepherd's pie, meatloaf, meatballs)
- canned meat
- fully cooked sausages or wieners without the casing
- boiled or poached eggs
- omelets and quiche
- sandwiches with finely minced fillings (egg, chicken, tuna salad) without lettuce or raw vegetables
- soft cooked legumes, mashed or minced (such as beans, split peas, or lentils)
- soft tofu

Foods to avoid:

- breaded, batter coated or deep fried meats, fish, or poultry, even if minced
- bacon, bacon bits, or beef jerky
- sausages and wieners in casings, even if minced
- wieners or hamburger in a bun
- processed luncheon meats, even if minced (the texture may change when heated)
- unblended soups with pieces of vegetables, meat, pasta, or grains
- all nuts or seeds
- crunchy nut butters or smooth nut butters spread on food

Desserts and Snacks

Foods to choose:

- ice cream, sherbet, or popsicles
- Jell-O®, Bavarians
- soft, moist, or easy to break cookies (such as Peak Freans® Digestive biscuits, ice wafers)
- soft baked desserts (such as moist cakes, pies) made with allowed foods

Foods to avoid:

- chocolates, hard candy, toffee, licorice, gum
- baked desserts with chocolate chips, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or any hard particles
- desserts with crispy, hard, dry crusts
- chips, popcorn, pretzels, or Cheezies®
- all pickles and olives

Condiments, Sauces, and Dressings

Foods to choose:

- sugar, syrup, or sugar substitutes
- smooth jam or jelly
- finely ground seasonings, herbs, and spices without hard seeds
- condiments that are smooth or have small pieces (such as ketchup, BBQ sauce, relish, horseradish, mustard, cranberry jelly)
- chutneys or salsas if made with minced ingredients
- non-hydrogenated margarine, butter, mayonnaise, salad dressing, sour cream
- smooth gravies or sauces (such as white sauce, cheese sauce, hollandaise sauce)

Foods to avoid:

- raspberry jam, marmalade
- herbs, spices, and seasonings with hard seeds (such as coriander, whole pepper)
- spreads, gravies, or sauces that are not smooth

* Sticky foods, such as cream cheese, cheese spread, and honey are allowed if mixed into cooking or thinly spread on allowed foods. These foods are not allowed to be eaten alone.

Making minced food

Some foods may be soft enough to mince with a fork, pastry blender, or potato masher.

Foods that need to be minced should be less than ½ cm (¼ inch).

You can mince harder food with a hand blender with a chopper attachment, mini chopper, food processor, or blender. Ask your dietitian or swallowing team for more information if needed.

Vegetables and Fruit

1. Drain vegetables or fruit before mincing.
2. Cut into small cubes or pieces.
3. Chop or mash until you have small pieces that are an even size.

Meat

1. Cut meat into small cubes or pieces. Use an electric chopper, blender, or food processor if needed.
- You may need to add extra liquid to make your minced meat moist. Add 1 Tbsp (15 mL) of liquid at a time. Liquids such as broth, gravy, sauces, melted butter, or margarine may be used to mince your foods.

No mixed consistency guidelines

If you are not able to eat both thin fluids and solid foods at the same time (in one mouthful) or if you have been **told by your healthcare provider not to eat foods with mixed consistencies**, here is a list of foods to avoid:

- canned fruit in liquid
- jellied fruit
- juicy fresh fruits that release juice when chewed (like watermelon)
- stewed tomatoes or baked tomatoes
- ice cream and other frozen desserts with nuts, dried fruit, candy, or other hard pieces
- crackers in soup
- more than 1 oz (30 mL) of gravy pooling around the meat

* **Avoid taking pills with thin fluids.** Instead, take pills with applesauce, pudding, or yogurt. For more information, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.