

FOOD CONSISTENCY GUIDELINES



This consistency guide provides information on terms for, and descriptions of foods modified for the specific needs of the individuals you support. You may use this criterion and adapt it to your organization's policies.

GUIDELINES FOR CONSISTENCY MODIFICATIONS OF FOODS AND LIQUIDS

- Alterations to the consistency of foods and/or liquids presented to the individual are made in accordance with the recommendation of an occupational therapist or speech and language pathologist and implemented according to the order of the person's primary care provider/doctor.

NOTE: If an individual appears to have difficulty with the prescribed consistency of foods and/or liquids, the staff should remove the food or liquid and immediately contact the Nurse for direction. In situations that pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of the person, clinicians or nurses can direct staff to downgrade the individual's food or liquid consistency to a more restrictive one until a new order can be obtained.

- Food consistencies are described on specific consistency forms and displayed in pictures contained in this manual. The clinician may choose to use these forms or another format that contains specific information for staff about how food is to be served to an individual. The definitions serve as general guidelines and exceptions can be documented by the clinician and prescribed by the physician.
- Liquid consistencies are defined in this manual. The prescribed liquid consistency can be indicated on the food consistency form or in another format that specifies how liquids are to be served to the individual.
- Some foods such as soups, cold cereal with milk, fruits that emit liquid when chewed (oranges, watermelon, etc.) and canned fruit have a dual consistency (liquids and solids in one food item). The clinician will provide information on the food consistency form or other approved regional format about any special considerations staff will need to follow when serving such foods.
- When a thickened liquid is prescribed, the food consistency served must be at least as thick as the prescribed liquid.
- Staff should receive specific training in the modification of foods and/or liquids by the appropriate clinician in the region/home before preparing a prescribed consistency.

LIQUID CONSISTENCIES

The texture of the liquid an individual receives is recommended by an Occupational Therapist or Speech Pathologist and is ordered by a Doctor. The texture of food should not be thinner than the prescribed liquid consistency.

THIN. Includes all liquids, Jell-O, sherbet, Italian ice, and ice cream. This consistency is considered non-restrictive. Nothing is added.

NECTAR. Apricot or tomato juice consistency; some liquids will require a thickening agent to reach this consistency.

HONEY. Liquids can still be poured, but are very slow. Liquids will require a thickening agent to be added to achieve this consistency.

PUDDING. Liquids are spoonable, but, when spoon is placed upright, it will not stay upright.

Remember that all thickening agents whether commercial (Thick-It, Thick and Easy) or non-commercial food items (instant potatoes, baby fruits, baby cereal etc.) add extra calories to the foods or liquids they are added to. If the individual is on a reducing diet, these calories must be considered. The dietitian must be advised if a thickening agent is to be used.

The information provided in this resource was reprinted with the permission of the State of Connecticut DMR and can be found in the DMR Health Standard # 07-1 Guidelines for Identification and Management of Dysphagia and Swallowing Risks Attachment F.

WHOLE FOOD CONSISTENCY

CLIENT DATA

Name _____

Address _____

Therapist _____

Allergies _____

Date _____



FOOD DESCRIPTION

- Food should appear as it is served in a restaurant
- Assistance may be needed with cutting
- Refer to current, prescribed diet plan (i.e. regular, restricted calorie, low cholesterol) as a guide when planning the menu

FOOD GROUP	ALLOWED	AVOID	SPECIAL NEEDS
Milk, dairy	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Fruits	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Vegetables	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Meat/Protein (Beef, pork, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter)	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Starch (Bread, cereals, rice, pasta)	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Fats, oils	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Desserts and snacks	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Liquid consistency

Dual consistency food considerations

Additional information

CUT TO BITE SIZE FOOD CONSISTENCY

CLIENT DATA

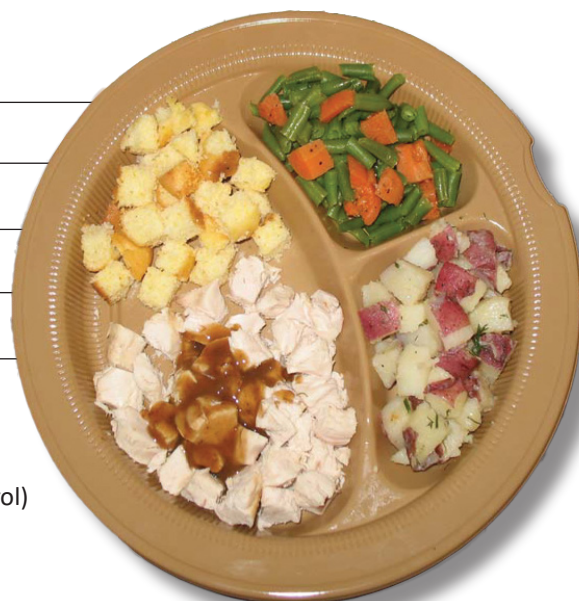
Name _____

Address _____

Therapist _____

Allergies _____

Date _____



FOOD DESCRIPTION

- All food must be cut into pieces no larger than 1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2"
- Refer to current, prescribed diet plan (i.e. regular, restricted calorie, low cholesterol) as a guide when planning the menu

FOOD GROUP	ALLOWED	AVOID	SPECIAL NEEDS
Milk, dairy	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Fruits	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	Melon balls and grapes are halved
Vegetables	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	Olives halved
Meat/Protein (Beef, pork, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter)	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	Skinned or skinless hot dogs preferred; Kielbasa/sausage skinned preferred; Cut lengthwise into 4 strips; then cut into 1/2" pieces
Starch (Bread, cereals, rice, pasta)	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Fats, oils	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	
Desserts and snacks	Any allowed by prescribed diet	None	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Liquid consistency

Dual consistency food considerations

Additional information

CHOPPED FOOD CONSISTENCY

CLIENT DATA

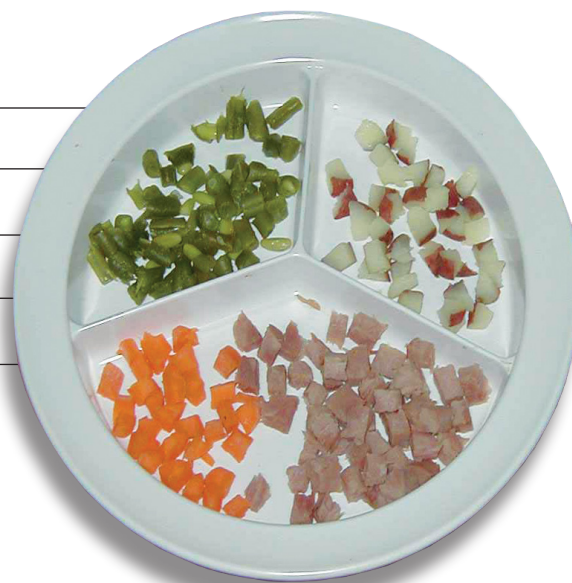
Name _____

Address _____

Therapist _____

Allergies _____

Date _____



FOOD DESCRIPTION

- Food is cut by hand or as directed to pea size pieces: 1/4" x 1/4" x 1/4"
- Refer to current, prescribed diet plan (i.e. regular, restricted calorie, low cholesterol) as a guide when planning the menu

FOOD GROUP	ALLOWED	AVOID	SPECIAL NEEDS
Milk, dairy	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Any with nuts, seeds, or other crunchy substances	
Fruits	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Fruit skin, seeds, dry fruit	Fresh fruit should be well ripened or softened in microwave
Vegetables	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Tough vegetable skin	
Meat/Protein (Beef, pork, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter)	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Bacon, skin, casing, nuts	Hot dogs, kielbasa, sausage - remove casing; Tough meat such as pork, steak, BBQ meat, and corned beef MUST BE GROUND
Starch (Bread, cereals, rice, pasta)	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Bagels, hard crusted bread, nuts, seeds, skin, dry fruit	Remove crust from bread - none with nuts, seeds or dried fruit; Moisten cereal with milk - none with nuts, seeds or dried fruits in cereal; Ditalini pasta can be used whole
Fats, oils	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Bacon	
Desserts and snacks	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Hard candy, chewy candy, popcorn, chips, pretzels	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Liquid consistency

Dual consistency food considerations

Additional information

GROUND FOOD CONSISTENCY

CLIENT DATA

Name _____

Address _____

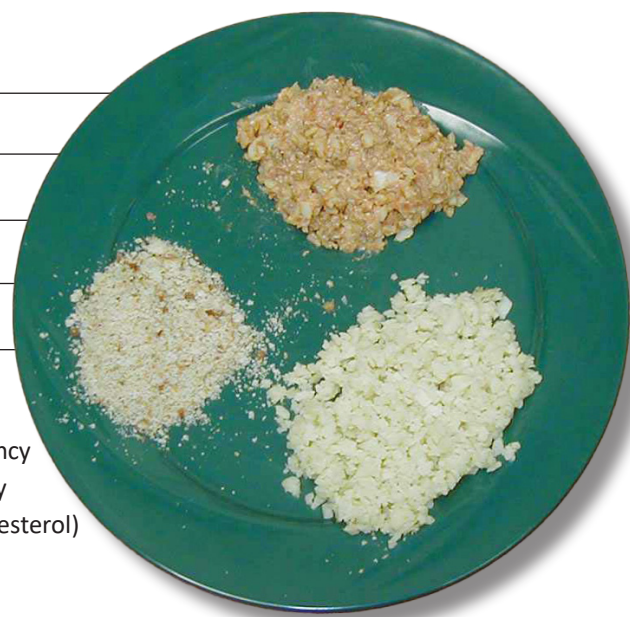
Therapist _____

Allergies _____

Date _____

FOOD DESCRIPTION

- All foods must be ground in a machine to “small curd” cottage cheese consistency
- Foods must be moist and liquids may be added to get the desired consistency
- Refer to current, prescribed diet plan (i.e. regular, restricted calorie, low cholesterol) as a guide when planning the menu



FOOD GROUP	ALLOWED	AVOID	SPECIAL NEEDS
Milk, dairy	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Any nuts, seeds, or other crunchy substances	Small curd cottage cheese and ricotta cheese may be served in whole form
Fruits	Any allowed by prescribed diet; Canned, cooked or fresh without skins	Fruit skin, seeds, dry fruit (raisins, prunes, etc)	Fork mash bananas or fresh ripe melon (no seeds)
Vegetables	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Vegetables with tough skin or strings; seeds	Remove large seeds (e.g. winter squash, pumpkin)
Meat/Protein (Beef, pork, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter)	Any allowed by prescribed diet; served with extra gravy/sauce	Bacon, skin, casing, nuts, breaded or battered fish or meats	
Starch (Bread, cereals, rice, pasta)	Any allowed by prescribed diet; Pastini can be used whole	Nuts, seeds, skin, potato skins	
Fats, oils	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Bacon	
Desserts and snacks	Any allowed by prescribed diet; Cakes - moistened and mashed; Jello-O - whipped	Hard candy, chewy candy, popcorn, chips, pretzels, raisins	Some cookies without nuts, may be broken, moistened and mashed

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Liquid consistency

Dual consistency food considerations

Additional information

PUREED FOOD CONSISTENCY

CLIENT DATA

Name _____

Address _____

Therapist _____

Allergies _____

Date _____



FOOD DESCRIPTION

- All foods must be prepared to a smooth consistency by grinding and then pureeing them
- Appearance is smooth like pudding
- Refer to current, prescribed diet plan (i.e. regular, restricted calorie, low cholesterol) as a guide when planning the menu

FOOD GROUP	ALLOWED	AVOID	SPECIAL NEEDS
Milk, dairy	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Any with nuts, seeds, or other crunchy substances	Small curd cottage cheese and ricotta cheese may be served in whole form
Fruits	Any canned allowed by prescribed diet; Certain fresh fruit (melon, kiwi, mangos, strawberries, bananas)	Fruit skin, seeds, other fresh fruit, dried fruits	Fork mash bananas or fresh ripe melon (no seeds)
Vegetables	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Vegetables with tough skin or strings	Remove large seeds (i.e. winter squash, pumpkin); Lettuce and baby spinach may be pureed
Meat/Protein (Beef, pork, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter)	Any allowed by prescribed diet; Puree with extra gravy, sauce, bullion or stock	Bacon, skin, casing, nuts, breaded or battered fish or meats	
Starch (Bread, cereals, rice, pasta)	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Nuts, seeds, skin, potato skins	
Fats, oils	Any allowed by prescribed diet	Bacon	
Desserts and snacks	Any allowed by prescribed diet; Must be moistened	Hard candy, chewy candy, popcorn, chips, pretzels, raisins	Some cookies without nuts, may be broken, moistened and mashed

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Liquid consistency

Dual consistency food considerations

Additional information

Use only powdered spices