



Food and Fitness

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Easy to Chew - Food Texture Level for the Elderly

Eating throughout a lifetime changes as we age. As babies, breast milk or formula is the first important nourishment for the body. As time “advances, the baby then gains teeth for chewing soft foods to eventually eating foods with an abundance of textures. Once aging occurs, for the older Americans (65-75) to the advanced aged (75+) Americans, it can become highly important for foods to be cooked in methods that are easier to chew. Difficulty in chewing can relate to mouth pain, muscle loss, jaw stiffness, and problems with teeth. Dysphagia is a term that is associated with chewing or swallowing difficulties. The International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI) outlines the different texture levels of foods and drinks. This covers the guidelines for easy to chew foods all the way to thin liquids (see page 2).



The food levels are seven through three and the drink levels are one through four (see diagram, p. 2). Foods are required to go through testing to ensure they are approved for each level. For this article, we are going to only cover number seven, easy to chew.

(Continues on Page 2)

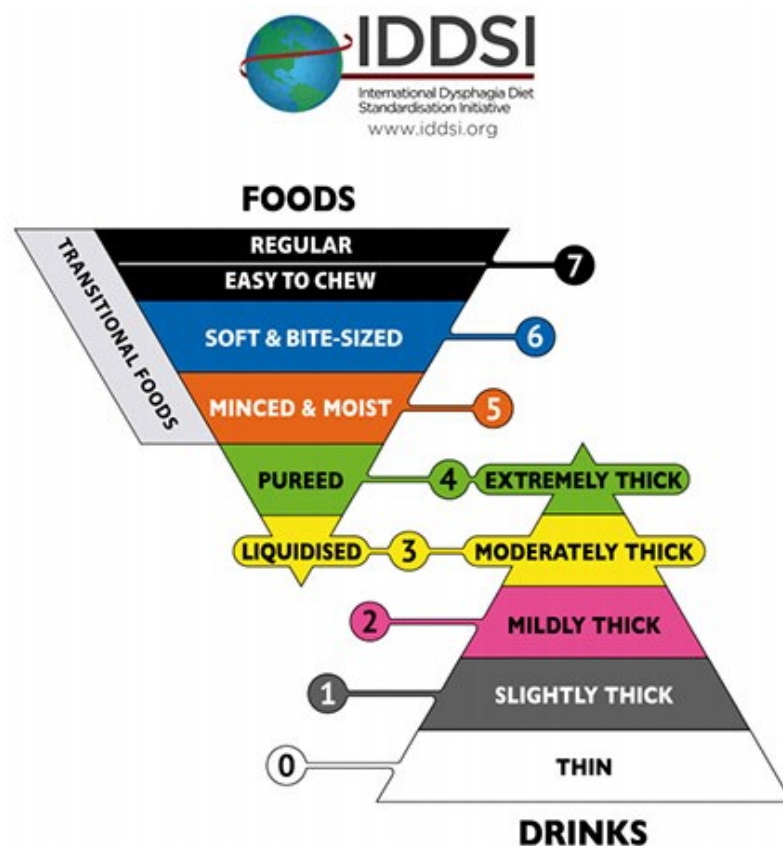
Easy to Chew Food Texture Level for the Elderly

(Continued from Page 1)

Even though the easy to chew is labeled as number seven, it is the first step into the IDDSI texture levels. The foods are required to be moist and tender. All foods can be included within this level if cooked in a way that allows for it to be soft in texture. The food pieces can be any size. Foods must not be hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, contain hard seeds, contain bones, or gristle. All liquid textures are allowed for easy to chew as well.

The tests for easy to chew foods include the Fork/Spoon Pressure Test or Finger Test. The utensil must be able to break the food apart easily with just the side of the utensil. When utensils are not available, food must be able to break apart easily with fingers. Easy to chew foods still require the ability to bite for this texture level. The ability to chew is also a requirement. If you do not have the ability to chew foods, another texture level might be more ideal.

Eating meals should be enjoyable for all ages. Understanding the chewing needs of each individual person can be the key to providing the right texture to optimize nourishment. Whether you are the older American, a provider, caretaker, or family member, knowing the chewing needs for the ones you are cooking for is critical. If issues with swallowing or chewing arise, consult your doctor to ensure you are on the right texture levels for your chewing needs.





7 REGULAR EASY TO CHEW



Level 7 Regular *Easy to Chew* for Adults

What is this food texture level?

Level 7 – Regular *Easy to Chew* Foods:

- ✓ Normal, everyday foods* of soft/tender texture
- ✓ Any method may be used to eat these foods (e.g. fingers, fork, spoon, chopsticks etc.)
- ✓ Food piece size is not restricted in Level 7, therefore foods may be a range of sizes. Food pieces can be smaller or bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm
- ✓ **Do not use foods that are:** hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, have stringy textures, pips/seeds, bones or gristle
- ✓ You should be able to 'bite off' pieces of soft and tender food and choose bite-sizes that are safe to chew and swallow
- ✓ You should be able to chew pieces of soft and tender food, so they are safe to swallow without tiring easily
- ✓ Your tongue should be able to move food for chewing and apply pressure until the food is soft and moist enough to be easily swallowed
- ✓ You should be able to remove bone, gristle or other hard pieces that cannot be swallowed safely from your mouth without help or direction from others

*May include 'mixed thin and thick texture' food and liquids together – ask your clinician for direction on this.



Why is this food texture level used for adults?

Level 7 – Regular Easy to Chew food may be used if you have strong enough chewing ability to break down soft/tender foods into pieces without help, you have no increased risk of choking and do not have swallowing problems. This texture may be right for you if you usually choose to eat soft food, have weaker chewing muscles for hard/firm textures, but can chew soft and tender food without tiring easily. It may also be a good choice if you have been sick and are recovering strength. Your clinician might recommend this texture if they are teaching you advanced chewing skills.

Who should not have this texture level?

This level is not intended for people where there is an identified increased risk of choking. **People who are unsafe to eat without supervision are not considered suitable for this texture level.** People can be unsafe to eat without supervision because of chewing and swallowing problems and/or unsafe mealtime behaviours. Examples of unsafe mealtime behaviours include: not chewing very much, putting too much food into the mouth, eating too fast or swallowing large mouthfuls of food. Always consult with your health professional for specific advice for your needs, requests and requirements for supervision. *Where mealtime supervision is needed, this level should only be used under the strict recommendation and written guidance of a qualified health professional.

Intended for general information only. Please consult with your health care professional for specific advice for your needs



Fruit—Dates

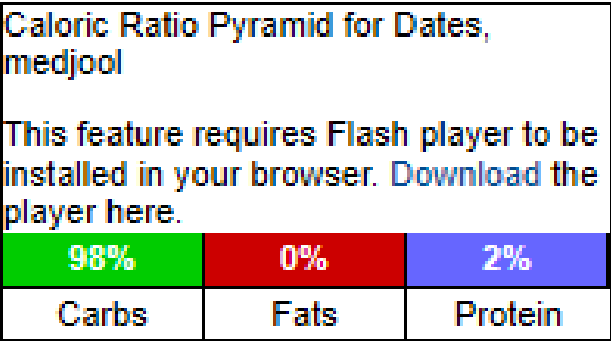
Dates are a fruit that grows on the date palm tree. The date palm tree grows in many of the tropical areas around the world. Dates are small in size and can be bright red to bright yellow color. The skin of a date is smooth when fresh but most dates seen in the United States are dried with a wrinkled skin. The date contains a single seed in the middle of the fruit with the outer flesh surrounding the seed (similar to a peach or olive). The two most common types of dates sold are the Medjool and Deglet Noor dates.

Dates over the last decade have become increasingly popular. The fruit has similarities of raisins and figs. Dates have a sweet flavor and are chewy in texture. When purchasing dates, you want to choose dates that are shiny and not too hard.

Dates make a great snack and provide a variety to one’s diet. As for nutritional value, the calorie content for dates in comparison to other fruits are higher but is similar to other fruits that are dried. When the dates are dried, the sugar content is more concentrated than a fresh fruit. Dates contain notable amounts of calories, potassium, manganese, magnesium, vitamin B6, and fiber. If you haven't already, give dates a taste!



Caloric Ratio Pyramid [What is this?](#)



NutritionData's Opinion[What is this?](#)

Weight loss:

★★★★★

Optimum health:

★★★★★

Weight gain:

★★★★★

The good:

This food is very low in Sodium.

The bad:

A large portion of the calories in this food come from sugars.



Dates, medjool

Serving size: 1 date, pitted (24g) ▾

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Calorie Information

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Calories	66.5 (278 kJ)	3%
From Carbohydrate	64.7 (271 kJ)	
From Fat	0.3 (1.3 kJ)	
From Protein	1.5 (6.3 kJ)	
From Alcohol	~ (0.0 kJ)	

Protein & Amino Acids

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Protein	0.4 g	1%

[More details ▾](#)

Vitamins

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Vitamin A	35.8 IU	1%
Vitamin C	0.0 mg	0%
Vitamin D	~	~
Vitamin E (Alpha Tocopherol)	~	~
Vitamin K	0.6 mcg	1%
Thiamin	0.0 mg	1%
Riboflavin	0.0 mg	1%
Niacin	0.4 mg	2%
Vitamin B6	0.1 mg	3%
Folate	3.6 mcg	1%
Vitamin B12	~	~
Pantothenic Acid	0.2 mg	2%
Choline	2.4 mg	
Betaine	0.1 mg	

[More details ▾](#)

Carbohydrates

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Total Carbohydrate	18.0 g	6%
Dietary Fiber	1.6 g	6%
Starch	~	
Sugars	16.0 g	

[More details ▾](#)

Fats & Fatty Acids

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Total Fat	0.0 g	0%
Saturated Fat	~	~
Monounsaturated Fat	~	
Polyunsaturated Fat	~	
Total trans fatty acids	~	
Total trans-monoenoic fatty acids	~	
Total trans-polyenoic fatty acids	~	
Total Omega-3 fatty acids	~	
Total Omega-6 fatty acids	~	

[Learn more about these fatty acids and their equivalent names](#)

[More details ▾](#)

Minerals

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Calcium	15.4 mg	2%
Iron	0.2 mg	1%
Magnesium	13.0 mg	3%
Phosphorus	14.9 mg	1%
Potassium	167 mg	5%
Sodium	0.2 mg	0%
Zinc	0.1 mg	1%
Copper	0.1 mg	4%
Manganese	0.1 mg	4%
Selenium	~	~
Fluoride	~	

Recipe— Date Squares with Oat Crust

Ingredients

- ◆ 3/4 cup butter
- ◆ 1 cup light brown sugar (firmly packed)
- ◆ 1 3.4 cups all-purpose flour
- ◆ 1 teaspoon salt
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon soda
- ◆ 1 1/2 cup quick-cooking oats (uncooked)
- ◆ 1 1/2 pounds dates (chopped)
- ◆ 1/3 cup sugar
- ◆ 1 1/2 cups water
- ◆ 1 teaspoon vanilla



Directions

1. Put the dates, 1/3 cup of sugar, water, and vanilla in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from the heat and stir in vanilla. Let the mixture cool for 5 to 10 minutes while you prepare the crust.
2. Heat the oven to 375 F. Lightly butter a 13x9x2-inch baking pan.
3. Cream butter and brown sugar together until light and fluffy. Combine flour, salt, and soda; stir well. Add the flour mixture to creamed mixture. Mix well. Stir in oats, blending well.
4. Pat about half of the mixture (about 2 1/2 cups or 13 ounces) into the prepared baking pan; spread with date filling then sprinkle evenly with remaining crust mixture. With your hand, tamp down the top crust layer lightly. Bake at 375 F for about 25 to 30 minutes, or until browned.

Don't Just Exercise Your Body, Workout Your Brain!

SUMMER

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

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I S R E W O L F N E A R E C L
S L Y S U N S H I N E U A E J
R U N E Y A L P P T C N V H G
O E T W G O R I L E O A D N O
O F S L S N C E B E R A I F A
D N U D W N I R I T B K L A D
T E G A I N A N D F I L O W C
U E U C M B G R E H S E X P A
O J A L M J B O R D D E S S M
A U N D I E U O V E R E R S P
Y L S U N N S N A E M A T A I
I Y S D G I F F E T E M G R N
W A T E R M E L O N I R U G G
B A S E B A L L E N T N T S T
N G M H H O L I D A Y N G G K
  
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By Evelyn Johnson - www.gets.com

August
Barbecue
Baseball
Boating
Camping
Canoeing
Flowers

Gardening
Grass
Hiking
Holiday
July
June
Outdoors

Picnic
Play
Summer
Sunshine
Swimming
Travel
Watermelon



July 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 International Joke Day	2 I Forgot Day	3 Eat Beans Day	4 Independence Day
5 National Apple Turn-over Day	6 National Fried Chicken Day	7 Chocolate Day	8 National Blueberry Day	9 National Sugar Cookie Day	10 Teddy Bear Picnic Day	11 World Population Day
12 Pecan Pie Day	13 National French Fries Day	14 National Nude Day	15 National Hot Dog Day	16 Fresh Spinach Day	17 Peach Ice Cream Day	18 National Caviar Day
19 National Daiquiri Day	20 Moon Day	21 National Junk Food Day	22 Hammock Day	23 Vanilla Ice Cream Day	24 National Tequila Day	25 National Chili Dog Day
26 Parent's Day	27 Take Your Pants for a Walk Day	28 National Milk Chocolate Day	29 National Lasagna Day	30 National Cheese-cake Day	31 Mutt's Day	

Monthly Observances

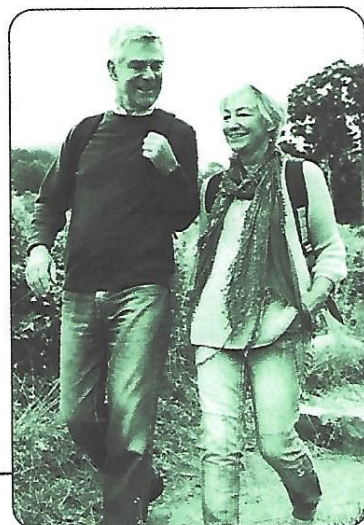
- National Blueberry Month
- National Anti-Boredom Month
- Unlucky Month for Weddings
- National Cell Phone Courtesy Month
- National Hot Dog Month
- National Ice Cream Month
- National Picnic Month



July

Benefits of Outdoor Activities

By Margaret Miltenberger, WVU Extension Agent – Mineral County



Monthly Challenge: Spend 30 minutes outdoors every day.

Health Motivator Talking Points

The next best thing to a magic pill for good health might be physical activity. Exercise means that more oxygen is flowing into our cells, which improves the function of cells and give us an energy boost.

- Regular physical activity can produce long-term health benefits, which increase your chances of living longer, help you feel better about yourself, decrease your chances of becoming depressed, help you sleep well at night and strengthen your muscles and bones.
- A double benefit is when we connect physical activity with being outdoors. There is something about being outside that can restore our soul. "I am well again, I came to life in the cool winds and crystal waters of the mountains . . ." said John Muir, America's most famous and influential naturalist and conservationist.
- Direct exposure with nature is essential to our physical and emotional health. Nature in and around the home appears to protect our psychological well-being. Making time to be outdoors and being active can bring a real boost to our lives.
- Hiking is one of the easiest ways to be outdoors and physically active at the same time. There are many amazing hiking trails throughout West Virginia. Locating short hikes in neighboring parks, fields and woods can make it easy to walk daily.



Chuckle of the Month:

Why do trees have so many friends?
They branch out.

Quick Club Activities:

Enjoy the Outdoors

Go outside for five minutes first listening and smelling the outdoors. Then, spend a few minutes walking.

Try a Hike

Plan a local club hike. It can be a short 20-minute trail or several hours, depending upon the interest of the group.

Learn More

Richard Louv. (2012). "The Nature Principal: Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age."

Richard Louv. (2016).
"Vitamin N: The Essential Guide to a Nature-Rich Life."

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Brain Exercise Answers



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