



## Diet advice following maxillofacial surgery

### What are the effects of surgery?

Surgical treatment of the head and neck can change the way you eat and drink. This can be due to pain and the changes that take place in your mouth, such as, the removal of teeth, the type of reconstruction you have had, and swelling after surgery. Sometimes surgery can affect the nerves and muscles that control the way you swallow making it more difficult to manage food in your mouth. It will take time for you to adjust to the changes in your mouth. The speech and language therapist will support you with these issues.

This booklet will provide you with advice and guidance as to what to eat and drink at home and to help build you up and prevent weight loss after surgery.

### What swallowing problems may I experience?

The following swallowing problems could be experienced after surgery:

- Difficulty chewing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Reduced mouth opening
- Drooling and dribbling when eating
- The feeling of too much saliva in the mouth
- Difficulty clearing food from the mouth
- Difficulty feeling food within the mouth
- Coughing when swallowing

If you have a 'flap' (piece of skin/ muscle that has been placed into your mouth) you will not damage or harm it by eating.

### What will happen after surgery?

It takes time for your mouth to recover and heal after head and neck surgery. During this time (usually around five to 10 days after surgery) you may not be able to have any food or drink by mouth; hence you may have a nasogastric tube (NG tube) to feed you.

The speech and language therapist and nursing staff on the ward will advise and support you to keep your mouth clean and the dietitian will continue to advise on your diet/nutritional requirements via the nasogastric tube.

The speech and language therapist will support you and provide information on how to swallow food and drinks most effectively and safely after surgery. The dietitian advises on how to reintroduce food back into your diet.

After surgery, patients normally start with a liquid diet as this is easiest to swallow, before gradually progressing onto pureed and soft, moist foods. Generally, the more you eat the quicker the function in your mouth will improve as food acts as physiotherapy for your tongue, jaw and mouth.

## **What will happen when I go home?**

It is likely that you will be given nutritional supplements to help meet your nutritional requirements while you get used to eating and drinking again.

As you begin eating and drinking and get used to swallowing, you may not need as many supplement drinks. However, sometimes the changes in your mouth take some time to improve, so people usually go home with supplement drinks to support their recovery.

You may see a speech and language therapist and dietitian as an outpatient if you require support once you have returned home.

## **Types of nourishing drinks**

To start with, you may find it easier to get a lot of your energy and protein from fluids. You may want to try these in addition to, or instead of your supplement drinks, but please discuss this with your dietitian first. You can carry on drinking these alongside a pureed or soft diet.

- To fortify milk, add two to four tablespoons of milk powder, for example, 'Marvel', 'Nido' or supermarket own brands to one pint of full fat milk and use this to make nourishing drinks such as milky coffee, malted drinks, hot chocolate and milkshakes. You can also add cream to these drinks
- Add a couple of scoops of ice cream or a thick and creamy yoghurt to milkshakes and smoothies
- Add full fat milk, milk powder or cream to tinned/homemade soups for extra calories and protein
- Avoid 'no added sugar' or 'diet' drinks unless you are diabetic
- Supermarkets provide a wide range of milkshakes, smoothies and yoghurt drinks on the shelf which you may like to try
- 'Complan' 'Meritene' (available as soups and milkshakes) and 'Nurishment' are also appropriate to use at this time. These contain protein as well as vitamins and minerals which are needed for a balanced diet
- You should aim to consume four nourishing drinks per day
- Use full fat milk for extra calories and protein where you can

## **Nourishing recipes**

### **Fortified milkshake**

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1/3 pint fortified milk
- milkshake syrup / powder

**Directions:** Mix ingredients together and serve chilled. Add a scoop of ice cream if desired.

## **Cup a Soup**

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 sachet Cup a Soup
- 200ml (1/3pt) fortified milk

**Directions:** Heat the milk until hot, add milk to the Cup a Soup, stirring continuously

## **Yoghurt drink**

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 small tub yoghurt
- 1 cup fortified milk
- 1 tablespoon skimmed milk powder

**Directions:** Blend together and serve

## **Fruity Float**

### **Ingredients:**

- ½ glass of fresh fruit juice
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ glass of lemonade
- 1 scoop ice cream

**Directions:** Mix all the ingredients together. Serve chilled.

## **Advice and guidance for following a pureed diet**

To puree food, use a blender/hand blender or food processor and add some liquid such as cream, full fat milk, gravy or sauces.

You can puree the food to the consistency that you would like and gradually increase the texture as your healing progresses. Remember that pureeing food will increase the volume of food, so it is important to add as much energy and protein as possible.

You may find that eating takes a long time so have six to seven small meals per day. You may decide to reheat some of the food that you have made in the microwave.

Some foods that are naturally a pureed texture include yoghurts, custards and mousses, which can be used as snacks during the day. The following meal items are suggested for those following a pureed diet:

### **Breakfast**

- Instant oats with full cream milk and sugar, honey or golden syrup
- Porridge or instant oats made with full cream milk with added golden syrup, sugar or jam. You can add cream if you wish
- Smooth thick and creamy yoghurt or fromage frais with fruit puree

## **Main meals (lunch and dinner)**

- Pureed chicken/meat with gravy
- Fish (pureed) and potato pie
- Pasta with tomato or cheese sauce pureed
- Pureed shepherds or cottage pie
- Pureed hot pot
- Pureed casserole
- Pureed cauliflower with cheese sauce
- Soup – choose homemade, tins or cartons of soup over instant soups. Aim to choose ‘cream of’ soups or those with potatoes, lentils or protein e.g. meat or fish, rather than just vegetable soups. Add extra foods to fortify the soup e.g. grated cheese, cream, milk powder, pureed beans, pureed lentils or pureed rice
- Mashed potato – instant or homemade mashed potato can be used. Add grated cheese, butter/margarine, milk, cream, sauces or gravy
- Eggs – add cheese, cream, crème fraîche, butter or margarine.
- Puree buna kichuri (lentils and rice)
- Puree curry meat/ chicken/ fish/ chickpeas and puree rice/chapati

## **Desserts**

- Pureed or stewed fruit with ice cream, evaporated milk or custard
- Pureed sponge with custard or cream
- Thick and creamy yoghurts, custard, mousse, fruit fools, instant whips
- Ice cream/sorbet with flavoured sauces e.g. strawberry, chocolate, toffee
- Mishti Dhoti using full cream milk add extra honey, jaggery or sugar
- Rabri adding extra cream or smooth nut butter

## **Advice and guidance for following a soft (easy chew) diet**

Ideally with a soft diet you should be able to mash/break food up with a fork.

When moving to a soft and bite sized or softer diet post-surgery you may want to add extra sauces to meals to make it easier for food to move around your mouth

## **Breakfast**

Meal suggestions for a pureed diet can be consumed, but you can also progress to meals such as:

- Scrambled egg with grated cheese
- Wheat biscuits with full cream milk and sugar, honey or golden syrup
- Porridge or instant oats made with full cream milk with added golden syrup, sugar or jam. You can also add cream if you wish

## **Main meals (lunch and dinner)**

- Casserole or stewed meats with vegetables
- Cottage or shepherd's pie
- Omelette with cheese and soft vegetables
- Inside of a jacket potato with baked beans and cheese or tuna mayonnaise
- Corned beef hash

- Macaroni or cauliflower cheese
- Bolognese
- Pasta bakes
- Flaked fish in sauce with mashed potato
- Soups
- Biryani made with soft bite-sized meat/chicken paneer add extra sauce, butter and yoghurt
- Chicken/fish/meat/lentil and rice with extra butter, cream or coconut cream

Examples of different sauces to have with food include gravy, white sauce, cheese sauce, parsley sauce, butter sauce, curry sauce and stock. Extra cheese, butter, smooth peanut butter, pesto, milk, evaporated milk, cream or coconut milk can be added.

## **Desserts**

Desserts suggestions for a pureed diet can be consumed, but you can also include the following meals in your diet:

- Rice pudding
- Sponge or plain cake with custard, cream or ice cream
- Trifle or other ready made desserts from supermarkets e.g cheesecakes, mousses or sundaes
- Jelly – this can be made with evaporated milk
- Crème caramel
- Kheer made with full cream milk add in additional cream sugar and nut butter
- Suji Halwa use ghee, condensed milk, honey sugar or smooth nut butter

## **Food fortification**

### **Introduction**

You may need to fortify your food if you are not eating well & losing weight. You can use ordinary foods to increase the energy and nutrient content of your diet.

To a pint of full fat milk add 2-4 tablespoons of milk powder to make fortified milk. Use this instead of milk or water to make coffee, packet soups, sauces, jelly, milk puddings, porridge and breakfast cereals.

### **To soup add:**

- Grated cheese
- Cream, crème fraîche
- Evaporated milk
- Lentils

### **To breakfast cereals add:**

- Yoghurt - full fat or Greek
- Fortified milk
- Evaporated/ Condensed milk
- Cream
- Honey
- Seedless jam
- Syrup, pureed fruit

**To puddings add:**

- Cream
- Evaporated/condensed milk
- Ice cream
- Chocolate sauce
- Sorbet
- Custard
- Honey
- Syrup
- Jam (seedless)
- Sugar
- Yoghurt, full fat or Greek

**To milk-based sauces add:**

- Cream
- Evaporated milk
- Grated cheese
- Butter or margarine

**To mashed potato add:**

- Cream
- Crème fraîche
- Margarine, butter
- Grated cheese
- Pesto sauce (from jar)
- Olive oil
- Milk powder

**More ideas to increase calories**

- Sugar in drinks
- Eat puddings twice a day

**Ready-to-eat meals**

Tinned, packet, frozen or boil-in-the-bag foods can be reheated according to the instructions and then blended or sauce added to reach the appropriate consistency.

**Portioning and freezing food**

If you have a freezer, you may find it convenient to make up a full recipe (4–6 servings) and then divide into portions to be frozen.

**Meal delivery services**

Some companies deliver pre-prepared pureed or soft meals to your home, e.g. Wiltshire Farm Foods, Kealth Foods, Mrs Gill's Texture Modified Meals. Contact them directly for a brochure detailing menus, fees and further information on their services

We recognise that your treatment is likely to have an impact on you and your family. Please inform the team if there is any support or information that you require to help you manage during this time.

Your dietitian is: .....

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.

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