Puréed foods may be necessary for certain individuals with chewing or swallowing problems. These problems may be short term dental issues that make it difficult to chew or long term conditions that cause swallowing problems known as dysphagia. A puréed food is any food item that has been processed into a smooth and uniform texture and therefore does not require chewing. For introductory information on puréed foods see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs168.

Purées can be made from most foods. Although some purées may be challenging to prepare, it is possible to quickly prepare puréed foods that are both appealing and nutrient dense. The purpose of this guide is to provide some tips for fast and easy to prepare puréed foods.

Canned foods are ideal for puréeing because canning is a heat-intensive process that softens most foods. Canned foods are convenient—no cooking time is required—and economical—they may cost less than fresh and frozen foods. Most nutrients are preserved with canning, and canned foods are “food safe” if handled appropriately after opening. However, some canned foods may be high in sodium due to added salt. Instead, choose those labeled low sodium or that have no added salt. Also, some canned foods, such as fruit, contain added sugars because they are packed in syrup. Fruits packed in water, fruit juice, or light syrup are better choices.

Canned Vegetables and Fruits
Most canned vegetables are ideal for puréeing. Examples include asparagus, beets, carrots, green beans, peas, spinach, and rutabaga. Certain canned vegetables such as corn are difficult to purée to a smooth consistency and thus, may not be appropriate for some individuals with dysphagia. With some canned vegetables, such as green peas and green beans, there may be a loss in color with canning. Puréed vegetable blends, such as peas and carrots, may result in an unacceptable color and the individual flavors may be hard to identify. However, some blends, such as three bean salad, make tasty and acceptable purées.

Applesauce is a commonly consumed puréed fruit and is available in many flavored varieties, such as cinnamon, blueberry, strawberry, and mango (Figure 1). Other canned fruits are easily puréed. Canned fruits recommended for puréeing include apricots, peaches, pears, and fruit cocktail. Note that some canned fruits have skins that may pose problems for puréeing to a smooth consistency.

Beans, Peas, and Lentils
Canned beans, peas, and lentils, also known as pulses, are ideal for the preparation of puréed foods. Some common canned pulses include black-eyed peas, kidney beans, pinto beans, fava beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), cannellini beans, butter beans, pink beans, and green and red lentils (Figure 2). They are considered a protein food. There are seasoned varieties such as baked beans or seasoned black beans that can be puréed, heated, and served. Most other...
pulses are bland and need added spices and flavors to achieve acceptable purées. See below for a menu example that includes puréed beans.

**Preparation of Purées from Canned Foods**

Directions for preparing purées from canned fruits, vegetables, and beans:

1. Note the number of servings indicated on the label of the can.
2. Drain the liquid and reserve in case some is needed if the purée is too thick.
3. Purée using a food processor until a smooth texture is achieved.
4. Test the consistency with the spoon test. See [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs204](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs204)

For more information on the preparation of puréed foods see [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs205](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs205)

**Planning Well-Balances & Quick Puréed Meals**

A puréed diet follows a similar meal pattern as a regular diet. It is recommended that meals be based on USDA MyPlate guidelines (USDA). The goal is to include grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and a protein food with most meals. See [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs207](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs207). Adding foods that are normally served as purées to a meal helps to ensure the acceptability of the puréed diet in terms of taste and texture. Examples include smooth yogurt, pudding, mashed potatoes, refried beans, pumpkin, and smooth cream soups. A pâté is a tasty alternative to puréed meat that requires no special preparation, just garnish and serve (Figure 3).

Remember to include grains into the puréed menu. As puréed grains are difficult to prepare, consider having a...
shelf-stable, commercial mix on hand to prepare puréed sandwiches and other grain-based foods (Figure 4). A food processor can be used to grind breakfast cereals. The cereal powder can then be combined with milk to prepare puréed cold breakfast cereal.

Layered Puréed Taco

½ cup corn grits (purée consistency)

¼ cup puréed refried beans

¼ cup puréed avocado

2 tablespoons creamy cheese sauce

¼ cup puréed salsa (thickened with tomato paste if needed)

Directions: Prepare each ingredient separately and layer.

References


Table 1. Puréed meal plans incorporating puréed canned and convenience foods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>Cream of wheat prepared with milk</td>
<td>Puréed bran flakes with milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puréed fruit cocktail</td>
<td>Puréed canned peaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cappuccino flavored yogurt</td>
<td>French vanilla yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>Layered puréed taco</td>
<td>Puréed ham and cheese sandwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vanilla pudding</td>
<td>Cream of tomato soup prepared with milk and powdered crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>Cinnamon applesauce</td>
<td>Crustless pumpkin pie with whipped cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td>Puréed canned chicken</td>
<td>Puréed spicy beef ravioli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instant mashed potato with gravy</td>
<td>Chocolate mousse with raspberry jelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puréed creamed spinach</td>
<td>Puréed peanut butter and jelly sandwich*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheesecake pudding with cherry sauce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td>Puréed canned salmon and cream cheese sandwich*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Quick tip: An easy way of preparing puréed sandwiches is to use a shelf-stable, commercial puréed bread mix.