

# CLEFT LIP AND PALATE POST-OPERATIVE NUTRITION:

Soft Food Diet Information



## WHEN CAN MY CHILD EAT SOFT FOODS AGAIN?

Your surgeon will tell you when your child can start eating soft foods during your post-surgery visit. Soft foods should be easily swallowed with minimal biting or chewing needed and should be able to be mashed easily between your fingers. Always remove the crust from bread that you are serving to your child.

Examples of soft foods include commercial baby foods (stages 1-3), mashed potatoes, well-cooked ground meats, fruit purees, vegetable purees, hot cereals, and scrambled eggs. See below for more soft food meal and snack ideas.

Your child's surgeon will also tell you when your child is able to use a straw, spoon, spouted cup, or other eating utensils. Be sure to ask when your child can return to a normal diet.

## WHAT ARE SOME FOODS MY CHILD SHOULD AVOID WHILE FOLLOWING A SOFT FOOD DIET?

**Crunchy Foods:** crusty breads, crackers, cookies, chips, fried foods, crispy fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc.

**Chewy Foods:** tough meats, chewy candy, gum, etc.

**Hard Foods:** candies, popsicles, or other foods on a stick.

**Other Foods to Avoid:** seeds, popcorn, and rice.

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS AND EXAMPLES FOR MAKING SOFT FOODS?

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains and Starches	Proteins	Dairy	Fats
Choose soft or blended fruits like applesauce, baked apples, or canned fruit.	Steam and mash vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, squash, cauliflower, and potatoes (remove skin).	Choose hot cereals such as cream of wheat, grits, or oatmeal and mix with milk for added protein.	Examples include scrambled or soft cooked eggs, ground meat, pulled chicken or pork, deli meats, tuna fish, chicken salad made with shredded chicken, flaky fish, tofu cooked soft, meat loaf, meat balls, quiche or egg casserole, refried beans, baked beans, and hummus.	Examples include milk, yogurt, smoothies made with milk, soft cheese such as cottage cheese, American, cheddar, or string cheese cut in small pieces, milkshakes, and pudding.	Add butter, olive oil, mashed avocado, or mayonnaise to foods to increase calories and provide essential fatty acids.
Remove the skin on ripe fruits such as bananas, peaches, mangos, pears, and plums.	Choose canned vegetables.	Flavor with mashed bananas or applesauce.			
Blend frozen fruit into smoothies or heat up frozen fruit in the microwave and blend into yogurt or pour over oatmeal.		Other examples include muffins without nuts, pancakes or French toast with the crust removed, well-done pasta, noodles in soups, and sandwiches with the crust removed.			

## WHAT ARE SOME MEAL AND SNACK IDEAS FOR A SOFT FOOD DIET?

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Try to include at least three different food groups in each meal including a protein or dairy food, fruit or vegetable, and a grain or starch. Aim for at least two food groups in each snack and include fats throughout the day to add calories and provide essential fatty acids.

### Here are some meal and snack ideas:

#### Breakfast:

- Scrambled eggs mixed with cheddar cheese and served with a mini muffin and banana
- Oatmeal topped with a scoop of vanilla yogurt and canned peaches
- Baked apples topped with cinnamon and served with cottage cheese and a slice of bread (crust removed) with butter and honey
- Mashed avocado on top of a piece of bread (crust removed) and a string cheese or scrambled eggs
- Drinkable yogurt or a fruit smoothie with pancakes
- Grits with cheddar cheese and ground turkey sausage cut in small pieces and served with applesauce



#### Lunch:

- Well-cooked pasta with tomato sauce and melted mozzarella cheese served with steamed broccoli
- Chicken salad sandwich (crust removed) and applesauce
- Soft taco made with refried beans or ground beef and cheese served with avocado pieces
- Vanilla yogurt served with mandarin oranges and a mini muffin
- Deli sandwich (crust removed) with cut up ripe pear or another soft fruit
- Soft wrap spread with hummus and steamed veggies rolled up and cut like sushi

#### Dinner:

- Mashed baked sweet potato, tilapia, and creamed spinach
- Cheese and broccoli quiche served with a fruit smoothie
- Soft taco with ground meat, refried beans, avocado, shredded cheese, and blended salsa
- Pulled pork sandwiches (crust removed) with baked beans and applesauce
- Meatloaf with mashed baked potato and well-cooked asparagus
- Well-cooked angel hair pasta with meat sauce and steamed broccoli

#### Snacks:

- Mini muffins (prepare ahead of time and pull from the freezer as needed) with canned fruit
- Steamed baby carrots and hummus
- Yogurt or pudding with canned fruit
- Smoothies
- Crustless bread with peanut butter and jelly and milk to drink
- Baked apple with cinnamon and sugar and a piece of cheddar cheese

## QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

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Please contact the Cleft Lip and Palate team at 443-849-6050.

**GBMC**

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