



# Tips for Safer Chewing and Swallowing

Cancer treatments and some surgeries can make it difficult to safely chew and swallow foods and liquids. If you have difficulty chewing or swallowing, try these tips to make eating and drinking easier and safer:

## Choose Soft Moist Foods

- Scrambled eggs
- Macaroni and cheese, soups, stews, and mashed potatoes with gravy
- Ice cream, custard, puddings, yogurt, cottage cheese, or gelatin desserts
- Canned fruit
- Canned or well-cooked vegetables
- Cooked cereal without lumps (e.g. oatmeal)

## Adjust the Texture of Foods

- Chop, puree or blend foods you have difficulty chewing or swallowing.
- Add gravy, sauces, broth, butter, margarine, mayonnaise or sour cream to soften and moisten foods.
- Soften hard foods such as toast by dunking it into milk, cocoa, coffee or tea.
- Cut food into small bites and eat slowly. Chew well and swallow your food before taking another bite.

## Adapt Your Eating Experience

- Keep mealtime relaxed.
- Sit as upright as possible when you eat and remain that way for at least two hours after the meal.
- Do not talk and eat at the same time.
- Take a small sip of water or another beverage after each bite of food, but do not try to wash down solids with sips of liquids. Be sure to follow any guidelines provided by your speech or swallowing therapist.
- Ask your dietitian if a nutrition supplement is right for you.

# Italian-Style Chicken Puree

Prep: 4 minutes | Cook: 1 minute | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 1 serving | Serving Size:  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup

## Ingredients

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped or shredded cooked chicken (white meat, dark meat, or a combination)

3 tablespoons tomato sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon Italian seasoning

Pinch salt

Pinch pepper

1 tablespoon grated or shredded parmesan cheese

## Directions

1. Puree the chicken, tomato sauce, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper together using a food processor or immersion (handheld) blender. Add 1-2 tablespoons water if the mixture is too thick to blend.
2. Transfer the puree a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave on High power (default setting) until warmed to your liking, about 30-60 seconds.
3. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and serve warm.

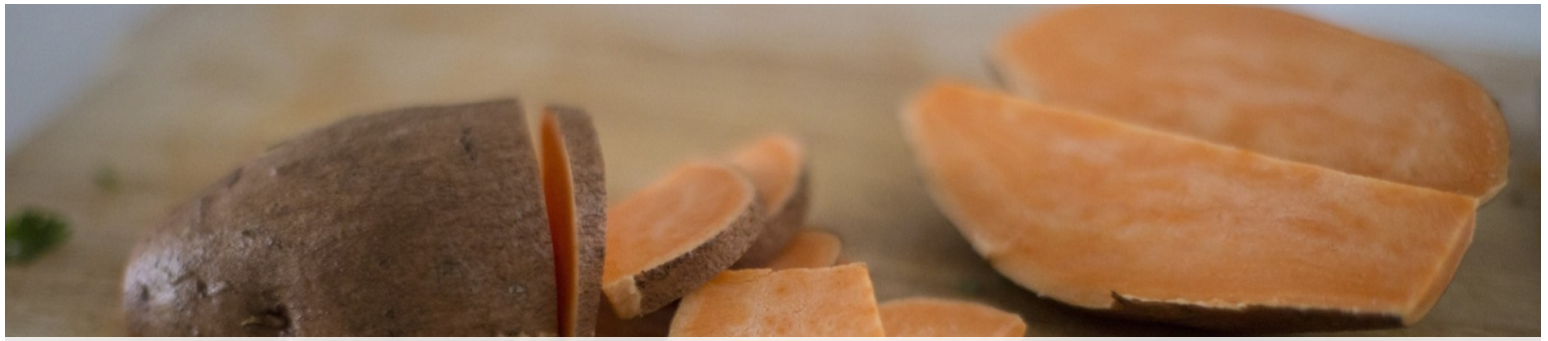
## Recipe Notes

- Canned chicken can be used if you don not have leftover cooked chicken.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 145 | Total Fat: 4 g | Saturated Fat: 1.5 g  
Sodium: 500 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 3 g | Dietary Fiber: 0.5 g | Protein: 23 g**

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Beef and Root Vegetable Puree

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 30 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

- 4 ounces stew beef, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 large carrot, peeled and chopped (about 1 cup)
- ½ large sweet potato, peeled and chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 cups beef broth, chicken broth, or vegetable broth
- Water, as needed

## Directions

1. Add the beef, carrot, sweet potato, and broth to a medium saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain a simmer.
3. Cover the saucepan with a lid and cook until the vegetables are tender, about 20-25 minutes. Halfway through the cooking time, check to make sure the vegetables are still covered by broth. If not, add enough water to cover them.
4. Blend until completely smooth with an immersion (handheld) blender or transfer to a standing blender, with the center piece of the lid removed and covered with a hand towel or folded-up paper towel.
5. If the puree is too thick, add an additional 1-3 tablespoons of water or broth and continue blending.
6. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- Season with salt, pepper, or other seasonings if desired.
- This puree can be stored in the refrigerator for 3-4 days
- To reduce the sodium content, use low-sodium or reduced-sodium broth or use water instead.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 180 | Total Fat: 5 g | Saturated Fat: 0.5 g  
Sodium: 800 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 14 g | Dietary Fiber: 2.5 g | Protein: 18 g**

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Creamy Peach Smoothie

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

- 1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- 2 cups frozen peach slices
- 1 banana
- ½ cup cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

## Directions

1. Add the milk, peaches, banana, cottage cheese, honey, and cinnamon to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. You may need to stop and scrape the sides halfway through, depending on the strength of your blender.
3. Serve immediately.

## Recipe Notes

- You can use mango or pineapple as an alternative to peaches, or try a combination of two or all three.
- If the smoothie is too thick, add 1-3 tablespoons of water or milk and continue blending.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 250 | Total Fat: 4 g | Saturated Fat: 2.5 g  
Sodium: 280 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 43 g | Dietary Fiber: 3.5 g | Protein: 13.5 g**

Adapted from RachelCooks.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)