

Soft Diet Recommendations for Patients with Jaw Pain

How may a soft diet help my jaw pain?

Chewing puts stress on the jaw joints, known as your “temporomandibular joints (TMJs)”, and chewing muscles, known as “muscles of mastication.” Decreasing the amount of chewing and force used while chewing allows these joints and muscles to rest so that you may heal.

What are examples of foods that I may consume while on a soft diet?

While you may feel that a “soft diet” sounds limiting, there are many options! Some suggestions are provided, below:

Breakfast ideas	Lunch and dinner ideas	Dessert ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instant breakfast • Smoothie • soft cereal (oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, grits) • Eggs (cooked any way) • Ripe fruit • Yogurt • Applesauce • Cottage cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuna • Egg • Crab • Ham salad • Chicken/turkey salad (fine texture) • Cooked vegetables • Mashed potatoes • Ground meat • Soup • Fish (cut into small pieces) • Soft bread without crust • Rice and beans • Tofu • pasta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice cream • Pudding • Jell-O • Milkshakes

Many people find creative ways to use the blender and add even more variety to their diets by changing the consistency of their favorite foods through blending!

What foods should I avoid while on a soft diet?

Avoid hard and chewy foods such as:

- Nuts
- Gum
- Pretzels
- Caramel
- Taffy
- Popcorn
- gummy candies
- carrots
- whole apples.

Cut foods, such as apples, into smaller pieces in order to make them easier to eat and limit the need to open your mouth widely. Decreasing the amount of chewing and jaw range of motion while chewing will help to reduce the stress on your joints and muscles.

Lastly, while lettuce, vegetables, and lean meats are healthy, eating these foods that require a lot of chewing may be stressful on your joints and facial muscles. Stick with cooked and soft vegetables and ground meats when you are having pain and soreness in these areas so that you may heal.

Please contact the Orofacial Pain Clinic at (734)-936-3940 if you have any questions or concerns!

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