

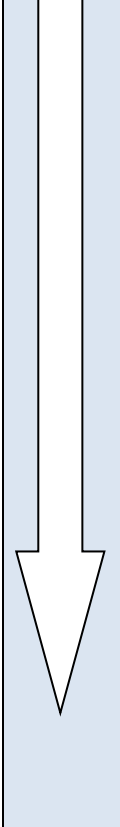




# Food Textures for Children

Learning to eat foods with different tastes and textures is a part of developing good eating skills. It takes practice to learn eating skills, such as chewing and self-feeding. A child's developmental stage or medical condition may affect their eating skills and how quickly they will learn new skills.

## Match the texture of foods to the child's eating skill level

Use the table below as a **guide**. Talk to your child's dietitian or feeding therapist about which food textures to offer your child.

**Help your child eat safely.** Make sure they are seated and stay with them while they are eating.

	Food texture	Examples of foods
	<b>Pureed</b> Smooth and moist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• commercially jarred, infant beginner or strained meat or poultry</li><li>• pureed raw, canned, or cooked vegetables and fruit</li></ul>
	<b>Mashed</b> Minced, ground, may have lumps, finely grated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mashed lentils or chickpeas</li><li>• mashed cooked carrots</li><li>• well cooked meat, ground</li></ul>
	<b>Diced</b> Soft, moist foods, cut into small pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• diced cooked vegetables or soft fruit, without seeds or tough skins</li><li>• canned flaked chicken, fish, or ham</li><li>• scrambled eggs</li></ul>
	<b>Finger foods</b> Soft raw or cooked foods, cut up into bite-sized pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cooked pasta</li><li>• soft raw or cooked vegetables and fruit</li><li>• tender meat, poultry, or fish</li><li>• unsweetened cold cereals that soften in the mouth</li></ul>

## Other textures

**Mixed textures** are foods that contain thin fluid and solid food in the same mouthful, like cereal and milk. Mixed textures may be harder to manage than single textures.

**Meltable or dissolvable solids** are foods that start out solid and melt in the mouth, like toddler puffs or rice husks. Meltable solids can help a child begin to learn how to manage pieces of food in their mouth.






Talk to your child's dietitian or feeding therapist before offering mixed textures, or meltable or dissolvable solids.

## Pureed foods for children

Pureed foods are smooth and moist, like pudding or mousse. Use a mini chopper, food processor, or blender to puree foods. Add liquid to thin as needed.

### Sample menu

<b>Breakfast</b>  Peaches, pureed	 Smooth hot cereal made with milk
<b>Snack</b> Smoothie, made with fruit or vegetable puree, milk, and yogurt, no lumps	
<b>Lunch</b>  Soft cooked carrots, pureed	 Lentil and rice soup, pureed
<b>Snack</b> Pudding and fruit or vegetable puree, thin with no lumps	
<b>Supper</b> Smooth mashed potatoes	 Beef, pureed Soft cooked peas, pureed

### Fluids

Offer fluids like milk and water, as suggested by your child's dietitian or feeding therapist.

## More pureed food ideas

### Vegetables and fruits

- Homemade or canned applesauce, smooth with no lumps
- Soft, cooked or canned fruit, such as avocado, banana, mango, papaya, or pear, pureed
- Soft cooked vegetables, such as beets, broccoli, squash, or sweet potato, pureed
- Tomato sauce, pureed

### Grain foods

- Smooth hot cereal, such as baby cereal with iron, cornmeal, or oatmeal
- Soft cooked pasta or rice, pureed

### Protein foods

- Baked beans, lentils, or tofu, pureed
- Bean or split pea soup, pureed
- Commercially jarred infant beginner or strained meat or poultry
- Cottage, mascarpone, or ricotta cheese, pureed
- Homemade or canned cream soup made with milk, pureed
- Smooth peanut or nut butter, mixed into hot cereal
- Soft cooked fish, meat, or poultry, pureed
- Yogurt, smooth or pureed













### Tips

- Puree foods the rest of the family is eating to help your child feel included at meals.
- Use pureed baby food from a jar or pouch when you are short on time or to add variety. Serve the food on a plate or in a bowl
- Keep foods separate, on the plate or in the bowl, so your child can taste foods one at a time.
- Add flavour using spices, seasonings, and smooth, thin sauces.
- Offer a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide ([Canada.ca/FoodGuide](http://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)).

## Mashed foods for children

Mashed foods are moist and finely chopped, grated, ground, or minced. Some foods are soft enough to mash with a fork or a potato masher. Use a food grinder, blender, mini chopper, or food processor for harder foods.

### Sample menu

<b>Breakfast</b>  Peaches, minced	 Oatmeal made with milk	
<b>Snack</b> Hummus (mashed chickpeas) and zucchini, finely grated	 	
<b>Lunch</b>  Green beans, minced	 Cornmeal (polenta)	 Chicken, minced
<b>Snack</b> Banana, mashed and cottage cheese	 	
<b>Supper</b>  Cooked carrots, finely grated	 Congee	 Beef, minced

### Fluids

Offer fluids like milk and water, as suggested by your child's dietitian or feeding therapist.

## More mashed food ideas

### Vegetables and fruits

- Soft cooked vegetables, such as beets, parsnips, squash, or sweet potato, mashed
- Soft, fresh, or canned fruit, such as avocado, mango, papaya, or pear, mashed
- Vegetable soups, with large pieces mashed, without broth

### Grain foods

- Hot cereals, such as baby cereal with iron or oat bran
- Muffins or pancakes, crumbled
- Pasta with sauce, mashed or ground

### Protein foods

- Bean, lentil, or split pea soup, mashed
- Beans, lentils, or tofu, mashed
- Cream soup made with milk, mashed
- Custard, rice, tapioca, or thick pudding
- Eggs (hardboiled, omelet, quiche, or scrambled), mashed
- Fish, like canned flaked salmon or light tuna, mashed
- Meat or poultry, ground in a food grinder or food processor
- Plain yogurt with mashed fruit
- Ricotta cheese with mashed fruit or vegetables
- Smoothies, thick












### Tips

- Mash, mince, or grind foods the rest of the family is eating to help your child feel included at meals.
- Keep foods separate, on the plate or in the bowl, so your child can taste foods one at a time.
- Use sauces or dips to add moisture and help bind foods together.
- Add flavour using spices, seasonings, and sauces.
- Offer a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide ([Canada.ca/FoodGuide](http://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)).

# Diced foods for children

Diced foods are soft, moist, and finely chopped. Use a knife to finely dice foods.

## Sample menu

<b>Breakfast</b>  Peaches, diced	 Soft muffin, small pieces	 Scrambled eggs
<b>Snack</b> Melon and strawberries, diced		
<b>Lunch</b>  Green beans, diced	 Chunky mashed potatoes	 Chicken, diced
<b>Snack</b> Avocado and tomato, diced and cheese, grated		
<b>Supper</b>  Carrots, diced	 Rice	 Beans in tomato sauce

## Fluids

Offer fluids like milk and water, as suggested by your child's dietitian or feeding therapist.

## More diced food ideas

### Vegetables and fruits

- Finely grated harder vegetables and fruit, such as carrot, cucumber, zucchini, apple, or pear
- Soft fresh, canned, or cooked fruit, such as apricot, avocado, banana, grapes, kiwi, mango, orange, or pear, diced

- Soft cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, parsnip, peas, squash, or sweet potato, diced
- Vegetable soup with small pieces of soft cooked vegetables

### Grain foods

- French toast, pancakes, waffles, or whole grain toast, cut into small squares
- Small pieces of cooked pasta or couscous
- Soft buns, pita, roti, or tortilla, cut into small pieces

### Protein foods

- Canned flaked chicken, ham, light tuna, or salmon
- Cottage cheese or ricotta cheese
- Custard, rice, tapioca, or thick pudding
- Eggs (omelet or quiche), cut into small pieces
- Fruit-flavoured yogurt or plain yogurt, with small pieces of soft fruit
- Grated, small cubes, or slices of cheese
- Ground meat or poultry
- Slow cooked tender meat or poultry, shredded or cut against the grain
- Small pieces of fish or fish sticks
- Soft cooked lentils or split peas
- Tofu, cut into small chunks

### Mixed dishes

- Chunky soups or stews
- Sandwiches with finely diced fillings, cut into small squares






## Tips

- Dice or finely chop foods the rest of the family is eating to help your child feel included at meals.
- Use sauces or dips to add moisture and help foods bind together.
- Add flavour using spices, seasonings, and sauces.
- Offer a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide ([Canada.ca/Food Guide](http://Canada.ca/Food Guide)).

# Finger foods for children

Finger foods can be easily picked up and eaten with the hands. Cut, tear, or break food into bite-sized pieces. At this stage, a child can eat most of the foods the rest of the family is eating.

## Sample menu

<b>Breakfast</b>  Peaches, cut in pieces      Toast strips      Hardboiled egg
<b>Snack</b> Chopped grapes and oat ring cereal 
<b>Lunch</b>  Green beans      Pasta      Chicken
<b>Snack</b> Cheese and rice cakes 
<b>Supper</b>  Peas      Sweet potato      Kidney beans

## Fluids

Offer fluids like milk and water, as suggested by your child's dietitian or feeding therapist.

# More finger food ideas

## Vegetables and fruits

- Avocado, cucumber, or zucchini, cut into bite-sized pieces or strips
- Fresh fruit such as banana, mango, or pear, peeled, and cut into bite-sized pieces
- Fruit canned in juice, in small chunks or pieces
- Grated apple, carrot, or pear
- Soft cooked vegetables, such as asparagus, carrot, cauliflower, potato, or squash, cut into bite-sized pieces

## Grain foods

- Dry unsweetened cereal
- Whole grain bagels, bread, French toast, muffins, pancakes, pita, roti, tortillas, or waffles, cut into strips or squares
- Whole grain crackers

## Protein foods

- Baked beans, cubed cooked tofu, or dal (lentils)
- Canned salmon or light tuna
- Cottage cheese or yogurt dip for soft fruit pieces
- Cubes of cheese
- Fish cakes or meatloaf, cut into bite-sized pieces
- Scrambled egg
- Tender pieces of fish, meat, or poultry

## Mixed dishes

- Casseroles, chunky soups (liquid removed), lasagna, pasta dishes, or stir-fried dishes, cut into bite-sized pieces
- Soft sandwich strips or wedges

## Tips

- Offer foods the rest of the family is eating to help your child feel included at meals.
- Add variety by offering foods of different textures.
- Add flavour using spices, seasonings, and sauces.
- Offer a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide ([Canada.ca/FoodGuide](http://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)).