



Special Situations: how to create modified meals for a loved one

“ . . . feed me with food convenient for me.”

— Proverbs 30:8

If you are providing some level of care to a friend or family member, there may arise some special needs at mealtime. Being alert to the situation will go a long way toward creating a peaceful environment. This overview of food modification provides ideas for how to ensure that meals are comfortable and harmonious for your loved one.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What’s the loved one’s current ability to cut food and eat without assistance?
- Is he or she able to chew and swallow?
- How can I best support these abilities?
- Would a change in the way the food is served fill the need?
- What adaptation or modification of food would best meet the need?
- How can the food be served as normally as possible?

MODIFICATION OPTIONS:

Depending upon what your loved one currently needs, there are many ways to use common kitchen tools to create a texture and form that’s comfortable. Many meals can be blended to whatever texture is needed.

Here are levels of modifying/blending foods:

Regular: The food is served in the usual manner; no modifications are needed.

Cut-up: The food is cut up into bite-sized pieces.

Cut-up fine: The food is cut into very small pieces — some chewing is needed.

Ground: The food is ground fairly fine (usually with an electric grinder or in a blender with a very small amount of liquid) — very little chewing is needed.

Blended/Pudding: The food is blended finer than “ground” with enough liquid added to make it a pudding-like consistency.

Liquid/Smoothie: The food has been blended very fine and enough liquid has been added that it is like a smoothie — drinkable from a cup or with a straw (or a spoon may be used).

Thin liquid: A liquid with very little sediment — strained to be sure all bits have been removed.

Transparent liquid: May have a color, but no sediment, and it is transparent.

Waters: Clear liquid made with grain, fruit, or vegetables — such as rice water, potato water, barley water, apple water, etc.).

Ices: Frozen liquid

DELICIOUS BLENDER MEALS

Most of us think of a blender as a tool for making smoothies or shakes, but there are actually many recipes for creating flavorful, smooth, nourishing meals . . . with a blender! Here are some links to delicious blender soups:



15 blender soups from Brit+Co:

brit.co/blender-soup-recipes



24 gourmet pureed soup recipes from Eating Well:

eatingwell.com/pureed-soup-recipes-for-a-blender



34 Blended Soups That Will Change Your Mind About Blended Soup

traditionalcookingschool.com/food-preparation/blended-soups

SEARCH PHRASES: type in "blender meals" or "blender dinners"

BRINGING MEALS IN

If you are bringing pre-prepared meals in for a friend or family member, a few practical ideas will make the meals enjoyable:

- Bring up the subject of food, then ask if having some meals brought in would be helpful at this time.
- Divide a piece of paper down the middle with "Likes" at the top of one column and "Dislikes" on the other
- Name various foods from different categories (meats, vegetable, fruits, grains, nuts, desserts) and then record "likes" and "dislikes"
- Find out if the meal will be heated in a microwave or a conventional oven. Be sure to deliver meals in the appropriate containers for re-heating
- If your loved one can't spend much time heating and cleaning up, then consider using a disposable plate with divisions. Put each hot food item in a separate area — so it can all be heated up at one time. Salads and dessert would be on separate plates
- If providing a meal for a family, casseroles are preferable
- Attach a note to each meal, naming the contents and any special instructions.

