

## Blended Diet Information Pack

### Information for parents and carers

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#### **Contact Details**

Your dietitian is .....

You can contact them on .....

## **What is a blended diet?**

A blended diet is where food and fluid are liquidised to a consistency so that they can be given to someone through their gastrostomy tube. This can be in addition to or as a replacement for commercial feeds. Blended diet can also be known as liquidised or blenderised diet.

## **Why choose a blended diet?**

Research suggests that it may improve symptoms of vomiting, reflux, loose or constipated stools.

## **What age can my child start a blended diet?**

From 6 months of age small amounts of blended diet can be introduced alongside breast milk or formula like just like the current guidelines for oral weaning. From 1 year of age a blended diet can be used either as the only source of nutrition or in combination with commercially prepared feeds.

## **What are the main things I need to consider before starting a blended diet?**

**Tube Type:** A blended diet is not recommended to be given via a jejunostomy or nasogastric tube and should only be used with a gastrostomy tube.

**Food Hygiene:** The correct preparation and storage of blended foods is important to reduce the number of bacteria that could grow within the foods. Hand washing is essential when preparing a blended diet and you must ensure all your equipment and work surfaces are clean. Further information on food hygiene is available on the Food Standards Scotland Website: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/>

**Equipment:** To ensure you are able to blend food to the appropriate consistency you will need additional kitchen equipment (e.g. a blender and sieve). A high-speed blender will blend food to an appropriate consistency more easily than a hand blender. A sieve may also be required to ensure no lumps are in the blended food.

**Time:** The time to administer the blended diet can take around 30 minutes.

**Allergy:** Your child is at the same risk of developing a food allergy by receiving a blended diet compared to if they were to eat food orally. If there is a strong family history of food allergies or you suspect your child may have had a previous reaction to food, you should inform your dietitian. Your dietitian will explore the risk of food allergies with you before starting a blended diet.

## **What type of food should I give my child?**

Every child needs a varied, balanced diet for growth and development and to build their immune system to help fight off infections. The type of food you give your child with a blended diet is similar to what you would give if they could eat orally. You want to offer your child a mix of all the different food groups: Fruit and vegetables, protein, carbohydrate and fats. Your dietitian can explain your child's individual nutritional needs and help plan suitable blended meals and snacks with recipe ideas. It might take some time to build up to full size meals but in time, your child could be taking the same meals as the rest of the family, blended through their gastrostomy tube.

## **What is the process of starting a blended diet?**

- Contact your dietitian to express your interest in starting
- Your dietitian, will discuss your interest with the other health care professionals involved in your child's care to determine if a blended diet is suitable for your child
- You will have a consultation with your dietitian to explain the blended diet in more detail and to complete a risk assessment form
- The local policies that are currently in place within your area, to help support your child with their blended diet will be explained to you
- When the appropriate paperwork and explanations are completed your child can begin a blended diet
- When your child first begins a blended diet, you start with small amounts and increase this gradually. Using baby pouches and pureed foods can be useful at this stage to help you get used to the appropriate consistency
- Administering blended diet is by plunge bolus technique only. You will be given guidance on this technique
- Your dietitian will help guide you through increasing both the volume of blended diet and the variety of foods until your child is fully established on a blended diet
- If you have any questions about your child's blended diet you can contact your dietitian for support.