

## Meal Ideas for Stage 4: "Soft Textures"

### Tips for Tolerating Foods

- Think "fork mashable"- the item you are eating should be soft enough to be mashed with a fork.
- Keep stage 4 allowed meats tender and moist:
  - Use a slow cooker
  - Poach meat in broth
  - Marinate meats in lemon juice or vinegar to tenderize
- Add flavor!
  - Use seasonings and spices to add flavor to your food (dried spices and herbs)
  - Use condiments to flavor and moisten your foods (ketchup, mustard, light mayo, hummus)
- It is important to eat mindfully after surgery:
  - Take tiny bites (the size of a dime)
  - Chew well! At least 20 chews before swallowing, 40 chews is even better
  - Pause 10-15 seconds after each bite; observe how you feel before having another bite

### Meal suggestions and Recipes:



**Eggs-** a great option packed with quality protein!

Scrambled, poached, hard-boiled, or fried- avoid overcooking. May use cooking spray (olive oil, canola oil)

#### Frittata

Mix eggs and seasoning (e.g., salt, pepper, onion powder, paprika, etc) in a bowl. Add 1 oz reduced-fat cheese per serving of eggs. Grease muffin pan with cooking spray. Pour mixture into muffin pan.. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 min (or until toothpick comes out clean). Store in fridge. Reheat in microwave.

#### All-American Scramble

Using cooking spray, fry 1 slice crumbled turkey bacon and 1 egg, 2 egg whites or ¼ cup egg beaters. Add 1 oz reduced-fat shredded cheddar cheese/feta/goat cheese and/or red peppers +mushrooms and cook until done. Can top with black bean salsa.

#### Vanilla Egg Custard

1 cup milk (or lactaid), one 12-ounce can evaporated milk, 4 large eggs, ⅔ cup low-cal sweetener (i.e. truvia, Splenda), 2 tsp vanilla extract, ground nutmeg. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Combine the milk, evaporated milk, eggs, sweetener and vanilla in the blender and pulse until smooth. Divide into 6 custard cups. Add a generous amount of ground nutmeg over each. Place custard cups in roasting pan. Pour enough hot water in the roasting pan to come about halfway up the sides of the custard cups and bake 25 to 35 minutes, until firm with slight jiggle in center.

### **Protein Salads (Tuna, Chicken, or Egg Salad)**

Flavor with any of the following:

- 1 Tbsp light mayo or Plain Greek Yogurt
- 1 tsp oil and lemon
- Salsa (chunks of veggies strained and removed, blended)
- Mustard
- Hummus
- 1/8 avocado, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, pepper, lime juice and buffalo sauce



### Frozen yogurt

- Mix Greek yogurt with:
  - 1 tsp SF jelly
  - 2 tsp unsweetened cocoa powder and Splenda.
  - 2 tsp SF pudding mix
- Freeze overnight and enjoy!



### No-cook or Microwaveable Meal Ideas

- Roll up 2 oz sliced chicken with 1 slice/1 oz reduced fat cheese
- Top 2oz of sliced chicken or turkey with 1 slice/1 oz reduced fat cheese. Microwave on safe dish for 30-60 seconds or until cheese melted
- Try shredded/pulled chicken with Mexican seasonings or BBQ sauce.
- Try a Trader Joe's Salmon Burger from the frozen food section
- On the Run? Try a small chili from Wendy's.

### Quick-Cook Meal Ideas: Meat and Fish

#### Turkey Chili

- Sauté 93% lean ground turkey.
- Once cooked through, mix with tomato sauce. Season with garlic, chili powder and salt (to taste)
- Top with hot sauce, 1 oz low fat cheese or light sour cream



#### Baked Cod (or salmon, or tilapia)

- Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper, may add cooking spray.
- Place fish on prepared sheet, drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil, juice from 1 squeezed lemon wedge and ½ tsp old bay seasoning.
- Bake at 350 degrees for about 8 minutes (or until baked through).
- Try other spices like lemon pepper spice or siracha with lime!

Meatballs/Meatloaf. Use your favorite recipe but use ground turkey or chicken instead of beef or pork

#### Baked Salmon Cakes -Preheat oven to 400F.

- Season 1 and ¼ lb fresh salmon with salt and pepper and fish seasoning (or other favorite spices)
- Heat a large sauté pan with 1 tsp oil (canola/olive) to medium-high heat
- Cook salmon- four minutes on each side. When cooked through, take off heat and let cool.
- In a bowl, flake the salmon. Add ¼ cup parmesan cheese, ¼ c plain greek yogurt, 1 tsp mustard and 1 egg. Mix to combine.
- Spray a non-stick baking sheet with cooking spray or use parchment paper. Shape the batter into equal sized cakes and place on sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes.

\*Or, use canned salmon. Drain and then mix with other ingredients, form into cakes and bake!

#### Grilled Parmesan Turkey Burgers

- Combine ground turkey, egg white, 3 tbsp parmesan cheese, salt and pepper. Add other seasonings as desired and form small patties then grill or cook in pan.

#### Lemon Rosemary Chicken

- Use 2 lemons; Zest and juice 1 lemon; thinly slice 2<sup>nd</sup> lemon.
- 1 Tbsp dijon mustard
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or 2 Tbsp pre-minced garlic
- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken thighs,

- 4 sprigs fresh rosemary OR 1 Tbsp dried rosemary.
- Preheat oven to 425F. In a small bowl, whisk the lemon zest, lemon juice, mustard and garlic; season with salt and pepper.
- On a rimmed baking sheet, toss the chicken, rosemary and sliced lemon with the mustard mixture.
- Arrange the chicken in a single layer and top with lemon slices..
- Roast for 20-25 minutes or until internal temperature reads 165 F.

## Vegetarian Meals

### Soy-Based Veggie Burger

- Heat up a frozen veggie burger and enjoy! Top with a small amount of ketchup, hummus, or mustard
- Or, cook the veggie burger and then crumble it up on a plate to make a vegetarian version of ground meat. Optional: add a sprinkle of reduced-fat cheese.

### Meatless Meatballs

- Microwave 2-3 meatless “meatballs” with ½ cup smooth tomato sauce until heated through.
  - You can find meatless “meatballs” at many supermarkets (Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods, Stop and Shop, etc.)
- Optional: sprinkle with 1 oz parmesan or reduced-fat mozzarella cheese.
- Optional: Add sautéed garlicky mushrooms as a side dish

### Mixed bean “salad” (cold)

- In a medium bowl, mix 1 can each of: low sodium chickpeas, waxed beans, kidney beans
- In a small bowl or measuring glass, mix juice from ½ orange or 1 lemon and 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar (may use sugar substitute for taste if desired)
- Pour vinegar mixture over beans and stir to combine. Add salt or other herbs to taste, i.e. parsley, onion powder, basil, cilantro, red pepper flakes

## Vegetable Ideas and Recipes

Soft-cooked vegetables add fiber and variety in stage 4. Consider these tasty tips!

### Rinse, cut and steam ½ cup of broccoli, carrots, cauliflower or brussels sprouts.

- Make sure a fork can easily pierce through before you eat.
  - Season with garlic powder, salt, pepper, paprika or your favorite spice!
- Or** Try “steamable” frozen veggies, pop in microwave, following package directions

### Sauté or boil your favorite leafy greens (spinach, collard greens, beet greens)

- Season to taste, eat as a side or mix into your eggs or frittata!

### Try cooking “veggie spirals” (spiraled vegetables like zucchini, that resemble noodles)

- Find these in the frozen vegetable section of your grocery store.
- Cook\* according to package directions, drizzle olive oil and season as desired
- Add as a side to your turkey meatloaf or baked fish or mix into your favorite egg dish or into tomato sauce instead of pasta noodles!

*\*Do not eat raw/fresh vegetables, even veggie spirals or zoodles, until stage 4*

### Use riced cauliflower also found in the frozen section of your grocery store.

- Prepare according to package directions and use as a faux rice side dish!