



# Managing Chewing Difficulties

## Did You Know?

There are many great sources of protein that are soft and easy to chew.

### Some include:

- Eggs
- Tuna salad
- Egg salad
- Beans
- Tofu
- Cottage cheese
- Baked or grilled (non-breaded) fish
- Ground meats

Difficulty chewing is a common problem for older adults, and can have many causes. Missing teeth, poorly fitting dentures, and mouth pain are typical culprits for chewing problems. If left untreated, these problems can increase the risk for weight loss, or inadequate intake of important nutrients.

## Maximizing dental health

Some causes of chewing problems can be prevented! Here are a few important steps to take to help ensure you or your loved one are not struggling unnecessarily:

- See the dentist regularly, and make sure any pain or new issues are addressed promptly.
- Make sure dentures fit properly – they should not move, make noise during meals, or cause pain.
- Practice proper hygiene of teeth and dentures, like brushing and soaking. Seek help with this, if needed.

## Helpful Hints

Some problems with chewing cannot be corrected, but here are some easy tips to make meals easier to eat:

- Cook vegetables instead of eating them raw.
- Add vegetables to soups or tomato sauces, then puree with a blender or food processor.
- Choose light canned fruit, thawed frozen fruit, or soft fruits like bananas, citrus, and applesauce.
- Use lean ground turkey, chicken, or beef in your recipes.
- Slow-roast chicken or beef to increase tenderness, and then cut into small pieces before eating.
- Eat hot cereal, or soak cold cereal in milk before eating.
- Dip cookies or crackers in milk, tea, or coffee.



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With a little creativity, chewing problems can be better managed, enabling you to continue enjoying your favorite foods *and* get the nutrients you need.