

The ALS Safe-Swallowing Cookbook: a starters guide

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ALS Center
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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For our patients.



Thank you

Thank you to the wonderful multidisciplinary team at the University of Miami ALS Clinical and Research Center, who it is a pleasure to work with each week.

A special thanks to Aileen and Samantha, who truly helped this book come to life.



Our Message

We are inherently passionate about food. We are even more passionate about maintaining quality of life for the patients we serve. For many, food and drink is not just a form of survival, but a reflection of fond memories, love, friendship and family.

As the Registered Dietitian and Speech Pathologist for the UM ALS Clinic, we focus on both maintenance of optimal nutrition and management of swallowing difficulties. These two things can be challenging for Patients with ALS (PALS) and their caregivers. Identifying various food or liquid textures, trouble deciphering which diet or superfood is the most beneficial, or issues with dexterity can hinder PALS and caregivers from enjoying mealtimes.

After listening to our patients' needs and concerns, we realized it was critical to integrate nutritious, wholesome, safe, variety-based foods and liquids into an easy and accessible starter's guide. Each recipe is designed with minimal ingredients, maximal nutrition, inclusion of more savory flavors, easy preparation and cooking methods. We hope that creating these recipes at home will provide a better understanding of safe-swallowing consistencies for PALS and spark creativity in the kitchen.

From our kitchens to yours, please enjoy our ALS Safe-Swallowing Cookbook: A Starter's Guide. Bon Appetit!

Warm Regards,
Evelyn and Justine

Nutrition and ALS

For PALS, the body starts working harder to keep up with the daily demands of life, which means extra calories are needed to carry out basic bodily functions. Malnutrition occurs when the body does not get enough energy from the food we eat to maintain our weight. This can stem from many causes, including but not limited to loss of appetite and trouble swallowing. The effects are harmful and may lead to decreased strength and mobility, more frequent falls, and even altered brain function. Therefore, nutrition has a key role in helping PALS maintain a better quality of life.

We can potentially avoid the problems that come with malnutrition by adding quality high fat ingredients, such as avocados, grass fed whole milk, and full fat Greek yogurt into foods we normally consume to increase calorie intake without affecting portion sizes all that much. Other examples of high fat ingredients include olive oil, nuts and nut butters, and pasture raised eggs. In addition, healthy sources of protein, such as lean meats, wild caught salmon, and beans are also great foods to increase calorie and protein intake. A Registered Dietitian (RD) can provide further information on how to create a diet rich in these healthy fats and proteins to keep up with the body's needs, promote weight maintenance, and ultimately decrease the risk of malnutrition. For now, try out some of these RD approved recipes and start adding some of the mentioned ingredients into your own favorite dishes!

Evelyn L. Victoria RDN, CNSC

Dysphagia and ALS

Many PALS experience dysphagia. Dysphagia (dys-FAY-juh) is the medical term for swallowing impairment. It is any challenge in the ability to eat, drink, or swallow. For PALS, the progressive degeneration of nerves can cause the muscles in the head and neck that control swallowing to have difficulty moving. It can also cause PALS to feel a “sticking” sensation or residual food/liquid in their throat, feel too tired to finish a meal or beverage, feel the need to clear their throat often, or experience coughing/choking during meals. Often times, aspiration can occur. Aspiration is when food, saliva, liquids, phlegm or other unwanted materials accidentally enters the windpipe and/or the lungs instead of the food pipe and/or the stomach. If aspiration happens often enough, it can lead to a very serious respiratory infection called aspiration pneumonia. Additionally, swallowing difficulty and general fatigue with mealtime can increase the risk for malnutrition in PALS. In order to manage swallowing difficulty and help maintain pulmonary (lung) health for as long as possible, your Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) may recommend certain strategies and modifications. These aim to make meals more manageable, nutritionally effective and safe! Remember, every patient is unique and not all patients benefit from the same consistencies, strategies or maneuvers. It is important to collaborate and work closely with your Speech Language Pathologist to know what is best for you!

Justine J. Allen M.S., CCC-SLP



Tips & Tricks

We understand that PALS and their caregivers have many time constraints. Using batch cooking by creating larger portions (doubling or tripling the ingredients in the recipe) and separating the final product into small tupperwares is a great way to save time. This allows for smaller, more frequent meals or snacks, with less time towards cooking.

When reheating food or liquids, adding small amounts of water to the dish that is being placed in the microwave is useful. This can help prevent uneven cooking, maintain the right consistency and maintain moisture in the dish.

Knowing your blender or food processor is extremely important. Each device is unique. Throughout this book we suggest pulsating your blender at 10 second intervals so it is easier to gauge the strength of your blender. The more familiar you are with your blender, the easier it will become to know how much time is needed to obtain a puree, honey or nectar thick consistency.

Oops! Did you blend too much or too little? That is okay. For things that need to be liquified more, simply add small amounts of liquid (e.g., whole milk, chicken stock, water, etc.) until you are at the right consistency. For things that need to be thicker, simply add something more solid (e.g., potato, banana, etc.) to bulk up your dish until you are at the right consistency.



Kitchen Staples

- 8x8 nonstick pan
- Butter
- Eggs
- Kosher salt
- Pepper
- Garlic (fresh or dried)
- Olive Oil
- Honey
- Thickener
- Baking soda
- Vanilla extract
- Brown sugar

Full Shopping List

- Russet potato
- Frozen cauliflower
- Frozen mushroom slices
- Frozen cubed butternut squash
- White onion
- Lemon
- Fresh mint leaves
- Watermelon
- Frozen strawberries
- Wild-caught smoked salmon
- Ground sirloin beef
- Whole-milk
- Heavy whipping cream
- Whole-milk shredded mozzarella
- Full fat cream-cheese or greek yogurt
- Parmesan cheese
- Nutmeg
- Dill
- Thyme
- Walnuts
- Full fat coconut milk (canned)
- Protein powder (your choice)
- Unsweetened cocoa powder
- No added salt black beans (canned)
- Mini chocolate chips
- Peanut butter
- Tomato paste
- Light soy sauce
- Apple cider vinegar
- Ketchup

Mechanical Soft

messy, barbeque sliders

Ingredients:

4 tbsp of butter (grass-fed, pasture-raised variety if possible)
1 pound of ground beef
½ yellow onion, minced
4 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tsp sea salt
1 tsp pepper
1 can (about 6 ounces) of tomato paste
1 tbsp liquid aminos or light soy sauce
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
½ cup ketchup
2 tsp light brown sugar
soft dinner rolls, such as Hawaiian or potato

(Note: If there is any trouble mincing ingredients, use the food processor)

Modifier:

Alternatively, this can be poured over your favorite soft pasta or mashed potatoes. Get creative! For other's enjoying the dish without consistency restrictions, this is great over a salad, in a sandwich or for a taco night!

Cook the meat:

Heat a large pan over medium heat. Melt the butter and add the ground beef. Cook until evenly browned. Add the minced onion/garlic mixture. Cook until the moisture from the meat has been reduced and onion/garlic is mashable with a fork.

Prepare the other ingredients:

While the meat is cooking... Whisk together all other ingredients in a bowl or use food processor if desired. Pour the sauce over the meat and lower the temperature to low heat or simmer and mix all ingredients together until everything is evenly coated.

Assemble the Sliders:

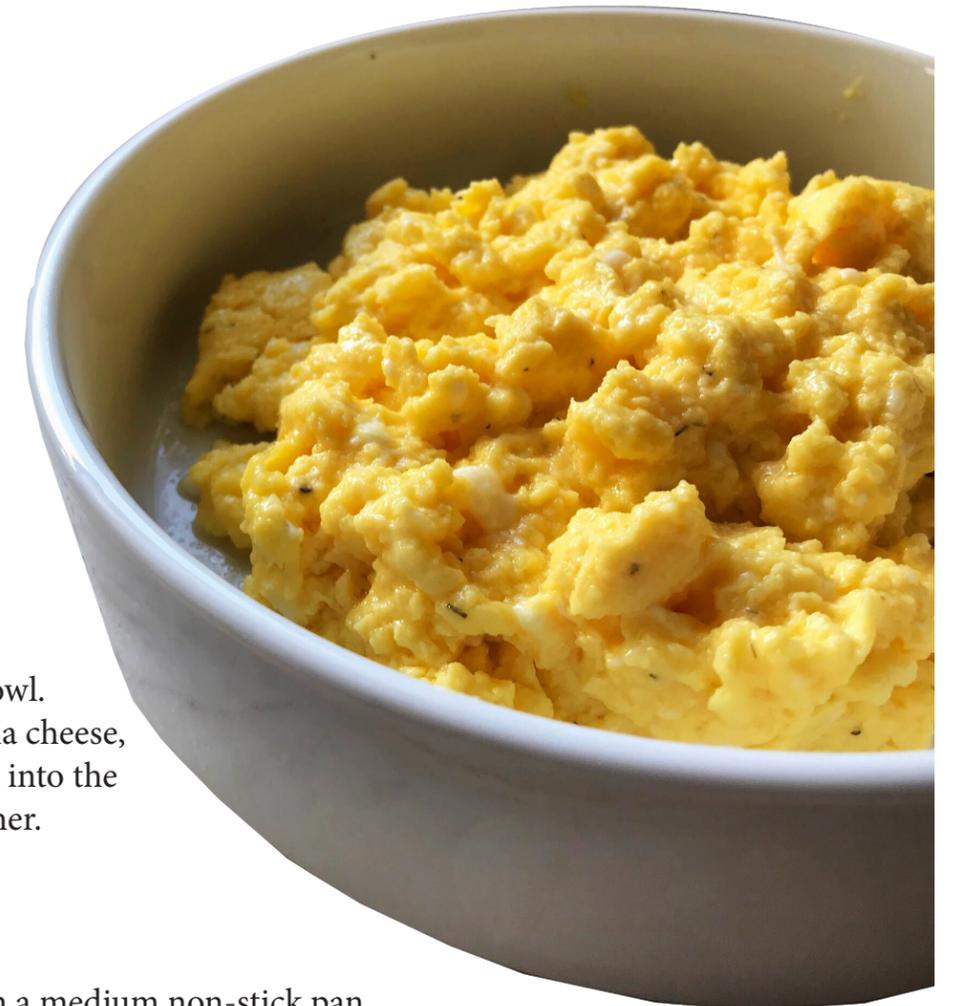
Open your dinner rolls, and spoon beef mixture over each roll.

Serve and enjoy!

Leftovers can be stored in tupperware and used for another dish. Create just the barbeque sauce and keep stored for any savory dishes that may need some added moisture for safe swallowing.



slow-cooked, soft scrambled eggs



Prepare the ingredients:

Crack 4 eggs into a medium bowl. Add in heavy cream, mozzarella cheese, parmesan, salt, pepper and dill into the bowl. Whisk ingredients together.

Cook the eggs:

Heat 3 tablespoons of butter on a medium non-stick pan on low heat. Add in the egg and cheese mixture. Stir continuously using a rubber spatula until the eggs slowly turn into small, moist curdles. This can take anywhere from 8-14 minutes depending on your the degree of your low heat. Once the eggs hold together, remove the pan from the heat.

Eat and enjoy immediately!

It is important to eat this dish while warm, to prevent any additional hardening of the eggs from being left out.

Ingredients:

4 eggs
¼ cup of heavy cream
Dash of kosher salt and pepper to taste
½ cup whole mozzarella cheese
1 tablespoon of parmesan cheese
Sprinkle of chopped dill (to taste)
3 tablespoons of butter

black bean brownie protein bites

Ingredients:

8 x 8 ceramic tin/pan or smaller size if not available
1 can (~15.5 ounces) of no added salt black beans, rinsed and drained
3 whole eggs
½ cup protein powder of choice (preferably one that is mainly whey isolate)
2 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
3 tbsp melted butter (grass-fed, pasture raised variety if possible)
Extra butter set aside for greasing brownie pan
¾ cup honey
½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ cup mini chocolate chips (or ¾ cup regular chocolate chips)

Prepare the ingredients:

Preheat oven to 320 ° F. Using some of the extra melted butter, grease the brownie pan and set aside. Place black beans into the food processor. Blend until mashed.

Add all the ingredients except the chocolate chips to the black bean mixture. Blend until you reach a smooth, silky, batter consistency.

Pour brownie mixture into the greased pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top.

Bake the brownie bites:

Bake for about 20-30 minutes. As each oven is different, be sure to check the brownies after 20 minutes. To make sure it is cooked through, stick a toothpick or knife into the center. If there is wet batter still on the toothpick, it needs more time in the oven. If it comes out clean, it is done! Remove from oven and set aside to cool down.

Modifier:

If cleared to eat/drink all types of liquids and soft consistencies, top with other goodies such as your favorite ice cream, caramel or hot fudge! This dish is also a fun way to get the whole family and children involved in enjoying safe-swallow foods.



Purée

s a v o r y salmon b i t e s

Ingredients:

½ cup softened, full-fat cream cheese or greek yogurt
½ cup softened butter (grass-fed, pasture-raised variety if possible)
½ pack of smoked wild caught salmon
Juice of ½ a lemon
1 tsp of dried dill, chives, or parsley, depending on your preference

Blend ingredients:

Add all ingredients into the food processor. Blend until ingredients are smooth.
Be sure to pulsate blender and blend at 10 second intervals to make sure you do not over blenderize your food.
Blend until it is a puree consistency.

Serve & enjoy!

Alternatively:

Measure out small bite-sized portions with a tablespoon and place over parchment paper to be chilled in the fridge overnight. Enjoy whenever you like!

Modifier:

If able to consume more dense consistencies safely, use this as a dip or a spread to enjoy with your favorite soft bread! For other's enjoying the dish without consistency restrictions, this is great with some chips or pita.



cheesy cauliflower potato mash

Ingredients:

8x8 ceramic pan
1 russet potato, cut into 1" cubes
1 bag frozen cauliflower (~20 florets)
1 clove of garlic, minced
3 tablespoons of butter
½ cup heavy cream
3 tablespoons of whole milk shredded mozzarella
3 tablespoons parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook the potato and cauliflower:

Preheat oven 375 degrees F. Fill a large pot with enough water to cover the vegetables comfortably. Season with salt and bring to a boil. Add the frozen cauliflower and the diced potato to the pot of boiling water. Boil until potato and cauliflower are easily mashable with a fork, about 15 minutes. Strain water from potato and cauliflower.

Prepare the other ingredients:

While the cauliflower and potato boils... Measure out the butter, heavy cream, and mozzarella. Place them with the minced garlic in the food processor. Once easily mashable, add potato and cauliflower. Blend until ingredients are smooth. *Be sure to pulsate blender and blend at 10 second intervals to make sure you do not over blenderize your food.* Blend until it is a puree consistency.

Modifier:

If this is a family dish, consider topping half the dish with bread crumbs and a larger portion of cheese. You can see the difference in texture in our photo. Consider the smooth side for your loved one with swallowing issues and the side with a coating of cheese on the left for other family members.

Bake and finish the dish:

Transfer to a small baking dish. Top with additional mozzarella and parmesan cheese (optional). Bake for 20-30 minutes or until golden brown on top.

Enjoy!

Serve immediately



Honey Thick

butternut squash bisque

Cook the butternut squash:

In a medium pot, combine the frozen cubed butternut squash with enough water to cover the vegetables comfortably. Add a dash of kosher salt and boil until the butternut squash is easily mashable with a fork.

Prepare the other ingredients:

While the butternut squash boils... Melt butter in pan on medium heat. Add chopped onion and walnut and sauté until lightly brown.

Blend:

Combine cooked onion and walnut with 2 tablespoons of olive oil into food processor and blend until smooth.

Season with salt and pepper to taste, and add the squash, nutmeg, honey, 2 tbsp of olive oil, and the heavy cream. Be sure to pulsate blender and blend at 10 second intervals to make sure you do not over blenderize your food. Blend until it is the consistency of honey.

Enjoy!

Let cool, eat cold or hot.

Ingredients:

5 cups of frozen cubed butternut squash
One whole white onion, coarsley chopped
½ cup of walnuts, coarsley chopped or ground
3 tablespoons of butter (grass-fed, pasture-raised variety if possible)
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
4 tablespoons of olive oil, separated
2 tablespoons of honey
½ cup heavy cream





p b & s t r a w b e r r y j a m s m o o t h i e

Ingredients:

½ cup of whole fat coconut milk or whole milk
4 tbsp creamy nut butter
4 tbsp strawberry jam or jam of your liking
2 cups of frozen strawberries
1 tbsp of protein powder of your choice

Prepare smoothie:

Blend coconut milk or whole milk, nut butter, jam, frozen strawberries and protein powder.

Be sure to pulsate blender and blend at 10 second intervals to make sure you do not over blenderize your food.

Blend until it is a honey consistency.

Enjoy!

Serve immediately and drink cold.

Nectar - Thick

c r e a m o f mushroom s o u p

Ingredients:

2 cups of frozen mushrooms
3 tablespoons of butter
½ white onion, coarsley chopped
1 clove of minced garlic
2 teaspoons of fresh thyme, chopped
1 cup whole milk
1 tablespoon of olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Modifier:

This is a great recipe to use as a sauce or gravy. If your Speech Pathologist recommends that you moisten your food (e.g., moist soft-solids or moist ground foods) you can use this to make your food more cohesive and easier to swallow!

Prepare ingredients:

Melt butter in pan over medium heat.
Add frozen mushroom, onion, garlic and thyme into the pan.
Saute until lightly brown.

Blend:

Place cooked mushroom mixture into the food processor.
Add milk, olive oil, salt and pepper into the food processor.
Be sure to pulsate blender and blend at 10 second intervals to make sure you do not over blenderize your food.

Season with salt and pepper to taste, and add the nutmeg, honey, 2 tbsp of olive oil, and the heavy cream. Be sure to pulsate blender and blend at 10 second intervals to make sure you do not over blenderize your food.
Blend until it is the consistency of honey.

Enjoy!

Let cool, eat cold or hot.





c o o l watermelon j u i c e

Ingredients:

3 cups of fresh, seedless watermelon, cubed
thickener

Prepare smoothie:

Blend fresh cubed watermelon.

Add the nectar thickener of your choice. Utilize this product as prescribed on the label (e.g., one packet per 12 fluid ounces).

Stir, blend or shake thoroughly.

Enjoy!

Serve immediately and drink cold.

Modifier:

For a refreshing spin, add mint or lemon if you desire!

l i m o n a n a & C O C O n u t f r a p p é

Ingredients:

2 cups of ice
¾ cup fresh mint leaves
Juice and pulp of 1 fresh lemon
Thickener
½ cup full fat coconut milk

Prepare ingredients:

Remove mint leaves from stems
Squeeze out the juice of one lemon. Remove seeds.

Blend:

Blend ice, fresh mint leaves, lemon juice and full fat coconut milk until smooth.
Add the nectar thickener of your choice. Utilize this product as prescribed on the label (e.g., one packet per 12 fluid ounces).
Stir, blend or shake thoroughly.

Enjoy!

Serve immediately and drink cold.



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