It is an object of the present invention to provide a food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing, having refrigeration tolerance and freezing tolerance, which can be cooked with heat, and with which syneresis is prevented.

Means to Solve the Problem

[0009]

As a result of intensive studies for solving the above problems, the present inventors have found that the problems can be solved through blending, in combination with curdlan, of a modified starch subjected to a specific treatment, and have completed the present invention. More specifically, it has been found that optimal properties as a food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing can be obtained by using curdlan together with a modified starch, and by specifying the amount to be blended, thus rendering the dispersion of curdlan easier and making it possible to effectively incorporate curdlan. It has been confirmed that the thus obtained food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing can be advantageous in that it can be thermally defrosted after being preserved in frozen state since it is tolerant to heat owing to curdlan, and that syneresis, or oozing of water from the interior of the food product, can be prevented owing to a modified starch.

[0010] Thus, the present invention is as follows.

In one aspect, there is provided a gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing, in which a food paste is solidified by a gelling of curdlan, the gel-form food product comprising the curdlan, a modified starch and a food paste-containing food raw material for an individual with difficulty in chewing, wherein the curdlan is contained in an amount of 1.5 to 5.0% by mass of the gel-form food product.

In another aspect, there is provided a method for producing a gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing, in which a food paste is solidified by a gelling of curdlan, the method comprising mixing and heating the curdlan, a modified starch and a food paste-containing food raw material for an individual with difficulty in chewing, to a temperature of 80°C or higher, wherein the curdlan is contained in an amount of 1.5 to 5.0% by mass of the gel-form food product.

(1) A food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing, comprising a curdlan, a modified starch and a

CLAIMS

1. A gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing, in which a food paste is solidified by a gelling of curdlan, the gel-form food product comprising the curdlan, a modified starch and a food paste-containing food raw material for an individual with difficulty in chewing, wherein the curdlan is contained in an amount of 1.5 to 5.0% by mass of the gel-form food product.

2. The gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing according to claim 1, wherein the modified starch is a cross-linked starch.

3. The gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing according to claim 2, wherein the cross-linked starch is one or more cross-linked starches selected from the group consisting of hydroxypropyl distarch phosphate and acetylated distarch phosphate.

4. The gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the modified starch is contained in an amount of 2.0 to 6.0% by mass of the gel-form food product.

5. The gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing according to any one of claims 1 to

4, wherein a hardness of the food product at 20°C is 3,000 to 20,000 N/m^2.

6. The gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the curdlan and the modified starch are contained at a ratio of 1:0.4 to 1:2.

7. A method for producing a gel-form food product for an individual with difficulty in chewing, in which a food paste is solidified by a gelling of curdlan, the method comprising mixing and heating the curdlan, a modified starch and a food paste-containing food raw material for an individual with difficulty in chewing, to a temperature of 80°C or higher, wherein the curdlan is contained in an amount of 1.5 to 5.0% by mass of the gel-form food product.