Developments on the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative, IDDSI

Dr Ben Hanson, University College London UCL

1. Where we are now – timeline and what’s happening
2. IDDSI: What? and Why?
3. Recent news
IDDSI UK timeline

**Aware**
FROM OCTOBER 2017
- Build awareness
- Communicate IDDSI adoption to all national stakeholders e.g. charities, manufacturers, professional associations
- Identify local IDDSI champion

**Prepare**
FROM OCTOBER 2017
- IDDSI compliant labels, foods and products being developed by product manufacturers and caterers
- An 'Implementation toolkit' is being developed and will be available by April 2018
- Local institutions to review iddsi.org website and resources
- Local healthcare professionals to discuss and begin the process of planning local IDDSI implementation (Implementation checklist to be available in January 2018)

**Adopt**
APRIL 2018 - APRIL 2019
- Healthcare professionals lead local implementation from April 2018
- IDDSI compliant products, foods and labels start to become available from April 2018
- All manufacturers and health care settings are fully IDDSI compliant by April 2019
IDDSI UK now

Adopt APRIL 2018 – APRIL 2019

- Healthcare professionals lead local implementation from April 2018
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IDDSI now
IDDSI now
Dr Kathy McLean, executive medical director at NHS Improvement, said: "Vulnerable patients have died or been harmed because there is confusion in the way people describe what type of food is suitable for those with swallowing or chewing difficulties.

NHS Improvement now wants all NHS staff to use clearly categorised food textures - as published by the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative - to make sure patients are fed safely and correctly according to their individual needs.

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) has developed a standard terminology with a colour and numerical index to describe texture modified for dysphagia. The intent is to reduce harm to patients who have dysphagia and to improve patient safety. The initiative, published in The Dysphagia Journal in 2016, is making the standard terminology widely available.

Terms for food in thickening, such as ‘thick of the throat’, have varied locally and numerous aids have been used by industry. National standard terminology for modified food ‘texture’ is including terms such as ‘fork-malleable’ was agreed in 2011 and widely adopted by the hospital catering industry and many clinical settings, including dentistry, for food products used to modify food, for example, with thickened or pureed food, for individuals who require modified food. This terminology is also incorporated into training specifications used by the dysphagia dietetic specialism.

Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing difficulty or disorder, which may be neurological, muscular, physiological or structural. Dysphagia affects people of all ages of all grades of care setting. Food texture modified for dysphagia is often used in a way to manage dysphagia.

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What is IDDSI?

- Published\(^1\) in November 2015 [www.iddsi.org](http://www.iddsi.org)
- Global standardised framework that provides terminology and definitions for texture modified foods and thickened liquids
- A continuum of 8 levels (0-7)
- Colour-coded
- Culturally-neutral
- Includes descriptors, testing methods and evidence for both drink thickness and food texture levels

Why IDDSI?
Let’s be specific…

Subjective, estimated
The categories are not clearly defined.

1. “Leaves a coating on an empty glass”
2. “Leaves a thick coat on the back of a spoon…”
3. “Needs to be taken with a spoon…”

Naturally Thick

“Leaves a coating on an empty glass”
Descriptors are subjective

Both were described as “stage 1”

Are they equivalent?
IDDSI is objective

A flow test has been used to define levels

www.iddsi.org
IDDSI is objective

A flow test has been used to define levels

IDDSI level depends on liquid remaining after 10 seconds flow.

Flow Test

Level 4: Use IDDSI fork-drip / spoon-lilt tests

Check your syringe: 0-10 ml scale = 61.5 mm

© IDDSI 2017
LIQUIDS: from National Descriptors to IDDSI

Subjective, estimated
The categories were not clearly defined.
“Needs to be taken with a spoon…”

“Leaves a thick coat on the back of a spoon…”
“Leaves a thin coat on the back of a spoon…”
“Leaves a coating on an empty glass”

Objective, measured
The IDDSI Levels are defined by measurement using the flow test for Levels 0-3 and the spoon/fork tests for Level 4.

The descriptors broadly match the IDDSI levels 0-4. But descriptors are subjective, not specific.
Subjective
Some criteria were not specifically defined.

FOODS: From UK National Descriptors to IDDSI

Dysphagia Diet Food Texture Descriptors

**Thick Purée Dysphagia Diet**

**General description:**
- Food has been puréed or has purée texture. It does not require chewing.
- It is a thick purée (*please see note below*).
- It is smooth throughout with no ‘bits’ (no lumps, fibres, bits of shelf/skin, husk, particles of gristle/bone etc.); it may need to be sieved to achieve this consistency.
- It may have a fine ‘textured’ quality long as the bolus remains cohesive in the mouth.
- It is moist.
- Any fluid in or on the food is as thick as the purée itself.
- There is no loose fluid that has separated off.
- The texture is not sticky in the mouth.
- It is not rubbery.

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**Dysphagia Diet Audit Checklist**

**Fork Mashable Dysphagia Diet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General description:</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Borderline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food is soft, tender and moist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been mashed up with a fork</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It usually requires a very thick instrument next point.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Any fluid, gravy, sauce or custard in or on the food is thick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No mixed (thick-thin) textures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, dry, crispy crunchy or crumbly bits</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No hard chunks e.g. pieces of apple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No skin or outer shells e.g. on peas, grapes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No husks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No skin, bone or gristle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No round or long shaped foods e.g. sausages, grapes, sweets</td>
<td></td>
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<td>No sticky foods e.g. cheese chunks, marshmallows</td>
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**Note** — *definition of very soft:
Any fluid, gravy, sauce or custard that holds its shape on a plate or other surface without spreading out if spilled. Thinner single texture foods are not considered to be very soft in this section, and advise on an individual basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLT = Speech and Language Therapy &amp; Text</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs some chewing</td>
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<td>It can be mashed with a fork</td>
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<td>Any fluid, gravy, sauce or custard in or on the food is thick</td>
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<tr>
<td>No mixed (thick-thin) textures</td>
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<tr>
<td>No thin loose fluid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Dysphagia Diet Food Texture Descriptors**

**Pre-Mashed Dysphagia Diet**

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FOODS: From UK National Descriptors to IDDSI

Textures B to E map to IDDSI Levels 3 to 6…
…after adding **detail and measurement**

- **B** Thin Purée: Define **flow properties** (IDDSI flow test)
- **C** Thick Purée: Define **moistness** and cohesiveness
- **D** Pre-Mashed: Define **moistness** and particle size (4mm adults / 2mm children)
- **E** Fork Mashable: Define **how soft**. Limit size of lumps to reduce choking risk (15mm adults / 8mm children)

(IDDSI flow test)

![Flow Test](flow_test.png)

Level 4: Use IDDSI fork and spoon
IDDSI level depends on liquid remaining after 10 seconds flow

**Flow Test**

- Level 1: No liquid remaining
- Level 2: Liquid trickles
- Level 3: Liquid oozes
- Level 4: Liquid flows
- Level 5: Liquid runs
- Level 6: Liquid runs and spreads
- Level 7: Liquid spreads and soaks

**IDDSI**

- **Liquidised**
- **Pureed**
- **Minced & Moist**
- **Soft & Bite-Sized**
- **Regular**

**NUTRICIA**

Advanced Medical Nutrition
✓ Bite-sized pieces of
   ✦ 1.5 x 1.5cm for adults
   (about the size of an adult thumb nail)
   ✦ 8mm x 8mm for children
✓ Chewing is necessary
✓ Tongue strength and control needed to move food for chewing and for swallowing
✓ Should be able to easily cut this texture with just the side of a fork

✧ Press into a bite-sized piece of food with your thumb in the bowl of a fork hard enough that the thumbnail turns white
✧ The food should squish easily and not return to its original shape

February 2018
Used with permission from IDDSI
IDDSI BREAKING NEWS

- Syringes / funnels: getting the right tool for the job.
  - Check website and newsletters for examples of correct syringes
  - Contact Nutricia if you need help with finding a syringe
  - Purpose-made funnels to follow…

- IDDSI Soft… [but not necessarily served in 'bite-sized' pieces]
  - Many settings require a soft diet for people without dysphagia.
  - We’re consulting…
### UK IDDSI resources

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#### United Kingdom

- **What is IDDSI - UK** (10 mins, YouTube video)
- **Comparison between the UK National Descriptors and IDDSI** (2 mins, YouTube video)
- **Editable PowerPoint template for transition from National Descriptors to IDDSI** (Power Point)

The following pages include checklists and implementation toolkits, case studies and FAQs for different UK settings:

- Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists (RCSLT) web page on IDDSI
- British Dietetic Association (BDA) web page on IDDSI
- RCSLT Giving Voice factsheet on dysphagia
- NHS Improvement Resources to support safer modification of food and drink
Take IDDSI with you: Free apps to download
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