

The Ultimate IDDSI Transition Toolkit



From Planning to Execution: Everything
You Need for a Smooth Implementation

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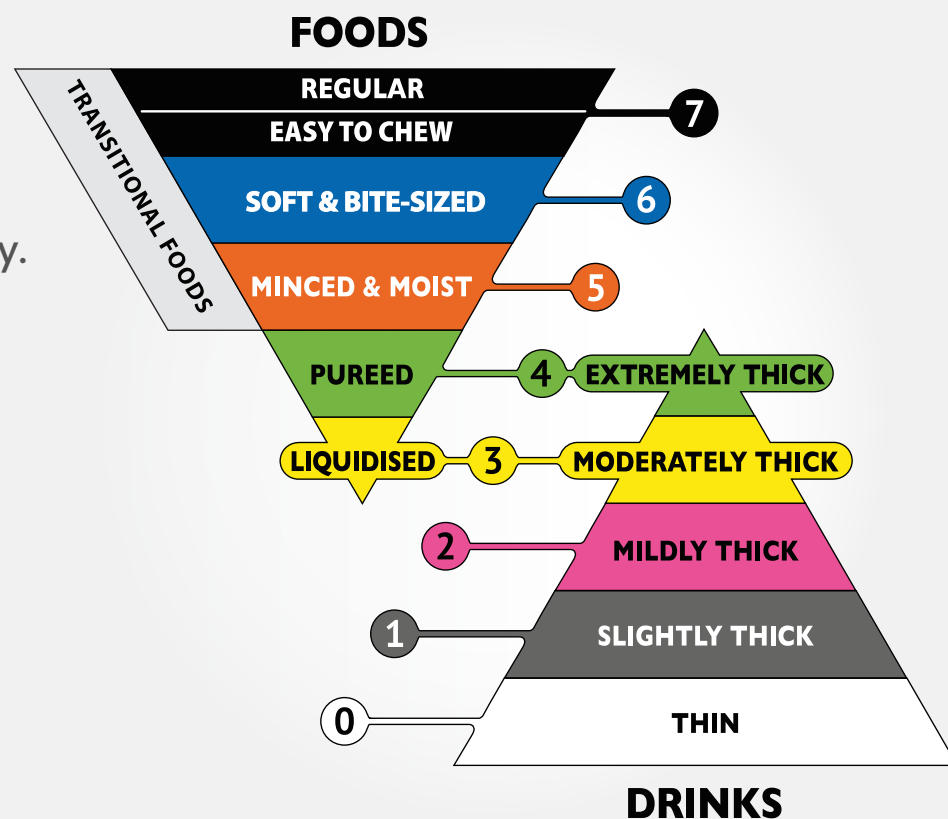
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The Purpose of This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to ease the process of implementing the International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI) framework in your senior living community or healthcare facility.

IDDSI ensures the safe preparation, testing and service of texture-modified foods and thickened liquids for individuals with swallowing difficulties. This step-by-step guide will review the process to implement IDDSI along with helpful resources.

Note: This guide is not an official IDDSI resource. For the most accurate and up-to-date information, visit www.IDDSI.org.



Getting Started With IDDSI

Tools & Resources

Begin by equipping your team with foundational knowledge and tools.



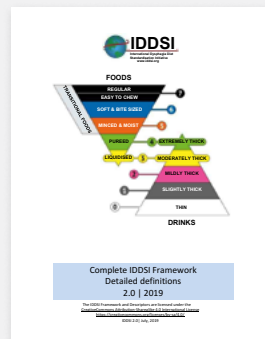
IDDSI Website

Bookmark: www.iddsi.org/home



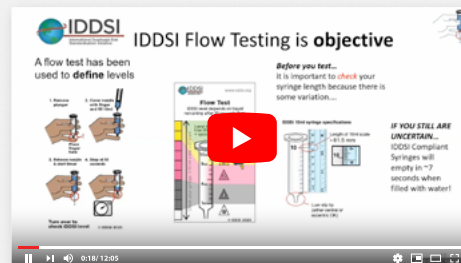
IDDSI App

Download on mobile devices & tablets for quick access to testing methods



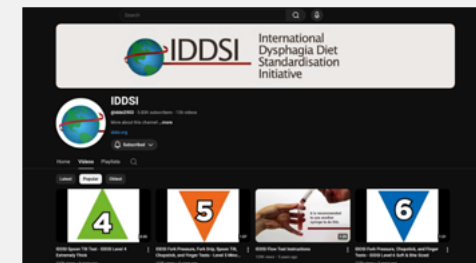
Framework Documents

Print and post the [IDDSI Framework](#)



Testing Method Videos

Watch [IDDSI Testing Videos](#) and [Testing Method Documentation](#)



Science Behind IDDSI Webinars

Learn the rationale behind the framework. [IDDSI has its very own YouTube page](#), with helpful videos and past webinars, these make for great training materials!

Build Your IDDSI Champion Team

A successful transition requires a collaborative and interdisciplinary team approach. Champions lead by example and support ongoing education.

Team Members We Recommend Engaging as Champions:

- ✓ Registered Dietitian
- ✓ Speech-Language Pathologist
- ✓ Chef or Cook
- ✓ Foodservice Manager/Director
- ✓ Nursing Leadership
- ✓ Compliance/Quality Representative

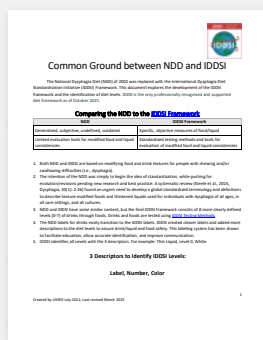
Tips:

- Assign a Team Lead who will be responsible for scheduling meetings and keeping the project moving forward.
- Schedule a kickoff meeting for the Champions and create a meeting cadence.
- In the meeting, discuss everyone's role, the targeted launch date and why IDDSI is important, so everyone is on the same page.
- Are you using a foodservice software? If so, how can it help you with implementing IDDSI? What tools are available within the system?

Crosswalk to IDDSI

Use the crosswalk to find the IDDSI comparable texture type for the textures that you currently support.

It is important to note that not all IDDSI textures need to be adopted at this time — focus on the textures that you currently support. You can choose to adopt additional IDDSI levels down the road as needed. IDDSI Levels have more refined measurements for safety and product consistency.



The Common Ground between NDD and IDDSI article is also a helpful tool when determining how your current textures fit within the IDDSI framework.

Crosswalk to IDDSI

	NDD/Other Terminology		IDDSI Terminology	Adopting Now or Later	Notes/Comments
FOODS	Regular	7	Regular		
	Dysphagia Advanced allowed Bread (Meats are ground)	EC 7	Easy to Chew		
	Dysphagia Advanced Chopped	6	Soft and Bite Sized		
	Dysphagia Mechanically Altered (Minced, Ground)	5	Minced and Moist		
	Dysphagia Puree (Puree)	4	Puree		
	Liquidised	3	Liquidised		
DRINKS	Spoon Thick, Pudding Thick	4	Extremely Thick		
	Honey Thick	3	Moderately Thick		
	Nectar Thick	2	Mildly Thick		
	Slightly Thick	1	Slightly Thick		
	Thin Fluids	0	Thin Fluids		

Audit Current Practices

Evaluate your current operations to identify gaps and opportunities for alignment with IDDSI.

Steps:

- ✓ Review current texture types and how they compare to IDDSI levels. The [Crosswalk to IDDSI](#) in this toolkit is a helpful for determining this.
- ✓ Each IDDSI level has its own unique Description/Characteristics. [Review the Detailed Definitions here.](#)
- ✓ Use [IDDSI Audit Tools](#) to assess recipes & menu items.
- ✓ Track Results in a Spreadsheet:
 - Download an example to get started: [Food & Drink/Liquid Testing Template.](#)
 - Customize this spreadsheet template with your menu items and the textures you plan to support.
 - Record Pass/Fail status.
 - Consider how recipes or current standards can be changed to meet testing requirements.
 - Notes on required changes (eg. reduce liquid content, added 1 tsp thickener).

Tips:

- **Start with Fluids.** These are a 1:1 match and will get your team started with the IDDSI Flow Test and becoming more familiar with IDDSI testing and terminology. [Watch the IDDSI Flow Test video here.](#)



- Make one extra serving during prep and test it on the line. This models best practices and builds staff confidence.

Create an Implementation Plan

A clear plan ensures a smooth and sustainable rollout. Now that you have completed the audit to determine your current state, you can plan the following:

- ✓ The timeline for rollout
- ✓ Staff training schedule
- ✓ Menu and recipe revisions
- ✓ Procurement needs (e.g., thickening agents, molds, testing tools)
- ✓ Review and plan when to update your policies and procedures to reflect the use of IDDSI.
This can include the diet manual, but also your Electronic Health Record (EHR) and dietary software.

Tips:

- Create your own timeline using the customizable timeline found in this toolkit.
- Start with Fluids as they are a 1:1 match. This initial rollout should go smoothly and will get staff in all areas familiar with IDDSI Terminology. It's a good starting place for others to become aware that you are working to transition to IDDSI practices, without too much overwhelm.

Standardize Recipes & Menus

Take what you learned from your recipe testing and update your recipes and standards accordingly. Ensure all recipes meet IDDSI standards for safety and consistency.

- ✓ Start with fluids (typically a 1:1 match).
- ✓ Move to Puree recipes, then the additional textures you plan to support.
- ✓ Update preparation steps in recipes and ensure IDDSI testing methods are clearly noted on recipes for all staff prepping and testing the foods and fluids.
- ✓ Label recipes with IDDSI levels and colors.
- ✓ Once each IDDSI Level has been standardized — put it into action! A gradual implementation plan makes it easier to work through the hiccups.

Tips:

- Work through the recipes on your current menu cycle, then focus on the recipes needed for your next menu cycle.
- Explore how your menu software can help with recipe standardization and labeling.
- Consider using EX4 vegetable broth as a liquid for your Minced & Moist Texture — this helps to thicken and moisten recipes without significant changes in nutrition or flavor profile.

Training and Education

Training builds confidence and consistency across your team.

What to Train	Who to Train
IDDSI Terminology	Everyone, including Physicians and Clinical leads
Food Testing Methods	All Food Service staff, RDs, SLP and nursing or unit care staff
Fluid Testing Methods	All Food Service staff, RDs, Nursing, SLP, Family members and patients/residents
Diet Order Updates and Entry	Physicians, Providers, Clinical Care Team, Food Service Staff and RDs

Training Tools:

- ✓ [IDDSI Testing Method Videos](#)
- ✓ Hands-on testing demonstrations
- ✓ [IDDSI Resources](#) (e.g., posters, framework charts)
- ✓ Badge Buddies or [Testing Cards](#) for quick reference

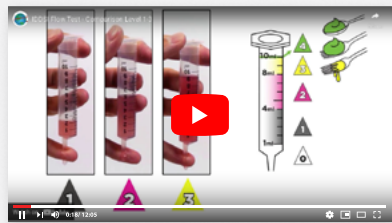
Tips:

- Focus on one IDDSI level at a time — reviewing each level separately will really help differentiate the unique factors of each.
- Use consistent terminology across departments.
- Try using Dual Terminology for a period of time to allow food service staff, nursing and others become more familiar with IDDSI Terminology (ex. P./PU4 or Chp/SB6).
- Create an “IDDSI Wall” where you can post helpful resources, so everyone feels confident reviewing the wall when questions arise.
- Hold daily 5-minute “IDDSI Chats” to discuss new learnings, findings or an open time for questions from staff.

Implement Testing & Quality Checks

Regular testing ensures ongoing compliance and safety. Ensure you have a testing schedule and plan defined in your procedures.

Watch the videos to get a clear picture of what each test should look like:



Flow Test for liquids (Levels 1-3)



Fork Drip Tests (Level 3)



Spoon Tilt (Level 4)



Fork Pressure (Level 5)

Documentation:

- Be sure to document testing results and corrective actions.
- Consider using existing temperature logs or Production reports for documentation.
- Recipes that require frequent corrective action may need to be reevaluated.
- Integrate into HACCP protocols.

Tip:

- Have a different staff member completing the QA checks on the tray line each day. This will help build confidence across the whole team while also building communication skills between co-workers. It is okay to send a minced chicken back if it does not meet the standards and staff should be encouraged to do so.

Cross-Department Communication

Clear communication ensures alignment and accurate meal delivery. Collaborate with:

- ✓ Speech-Language Pathologists
- ✓ Nursing and Care Teams
- ✓ Physicians
- ✓ Dietitians
- ✓ IT Team – to help with setting up your EHR

Tips:

- Use IDDSI terminology in dietary orders.
- Train staff to interpret tray tickets and production reports.
- Hold interdisciplinary huddles to review feedback and update.



Monitor, Evaluate and Adjust

Continuous improvement is key to long-term success.

- ✓ Collect feedback from foodservice staff, clinical teams and residents.
- ✓ Assess resident intake.
- ✓ Adjust recipes and menus based on feedback.
- ✓ Schedule routine reviews and refresher training.
- ✓ Include IDDSI education in staff onboarding.

Tip:

- Set yourself up for success. Having a plan on how to onboard new employees including those outside of the foodservice department will be essential in ensuring patient safety and consistency for the long term.

Timeline

We have created a timeline as a guide to get you started. It's important to remember that IDDSI Implementation will look different for everyone. Acute Care will have a different timeline than Assisted Living — the important part is getting a plan in place.

Depending on timelines and goals, teams can successfully implement IDDSI one level at a time while others have jumped in and implemented everything all at once.

It is important to think about what will work best for your facility and your timeline. The key to success is the willingness to adapt!

Timeline Guide

Task	What's involved	Suggested Time Frame
Getting Started with IDDSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make yourself comfortable with the IDDSI • Print resources • Start spreading the news that you will be actively working on implementing IDDSI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on your previous knowledge around IDDSI, this may differ but give yourself one (1) week to really focus on learning all things IDDSI.
Build Your IDDSI Champion Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to team members who will be positive role models in this project • Schedule your first meeting • Determine a target date for launching IDDSI • Decide on a meeting cadence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule your kick off meeting and then schedule weekly or bi-weekly meetings to get the ball rolling!
Audit Current Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be the biggest lift • Get others involved with you • Test all recipes on your menu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit for at least as many weeks as your menu cycle. For example, a 4-week menu needs 4 weeks of auditing. Adjust based on menu length and variety.
Create an Implementation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the audit, you'll better understand which recipes need changes to meet IDDSI standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will also be variable depending on your audit
Standardize Recipes and Menus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the thickening product you will be using, what will be the standard liquid used in recipes • Take the information from the Audits and work in the software to bring the recipes up to standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 months depending on the number of recipes used on the menu
Review and Update Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect the use of IDDSI • EHR • Diet Manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 weeks
Training and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train all staff on IDDSI terminology, testing methods and the process if something is not meeting the standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing- this should be started as soon as testing & auditing is completed with a push to training all staff at least 1 month prior to launching
Implement Fluids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluids being a 1:1 match, start here and get fluids rolled out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week
Implement Puree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puree is usually the easiest texture to implement since it typically needs fewer modifications. Once this level has been tested, implement it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 weeks
Implement Testing and Quality Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have staff test daily to build familiarity. This will give IDDSI Champions useful data on which recipe are IDDSI complaint and which need review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing- this is something that is done daily and will continue to be. The process will become quicker, but it is important to TEST
Cross-Department Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are getting close to launching, spread the news! • Host a lunch & learn for everyone to learn what IDDSI is all about, show off your work! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 months before launch to give teams time to learn, ask questions and build confidence.
Launch Remaining Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you feel your menu is in a good place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on your launch plan, this may be a monthly phased approach or a 1-day launch!
Monitor, Evaluate and Adjust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDDSI is continuously evolving, keep working on new recipes, testing and completing staff trainings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Your Individualized Implementation Plan

Task	Goals/Notes	Timeline/Dates
Getting Started with IDDSI		
Build Your IDDSI Champion Team		
Audit Current Practices		
Create an Implementation Plan		
Standardise Recipes and Menus		
Review and Update Policies and Procedures		
Training and Education		
Implement Fluids		
Implement Puree		
Implement Testing and Quality Checks		
Cross-Department Communication		
Launch Remaining Changes		
Monitor, Evaluate and Adjust		

Wrapping Up

Transitioning to IDDSI is more than compliance — it's about delivering safe, consistent dining experiences.

By following this toolkit, you've built a roadmap: from forming your champion team and auditing practices to standardizing menus, training staff and monitoring success.

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MealSuite is here to help every step of the way.

Need guidance on recipes, training or integrating IDDSI-supporting technology?

Get in touch with a specialist at sales@mealsuite.com

Together, we'll make your transition smooth and impactful for your residents and team.



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our **all-in-one**
foodservice platform!

