Common Ground between NDD and IDDSI

The National Dysphagia Diet (NDD) of 2002 is being replaced by the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) Framework, founded in 2013. This document explores the development of IDDSI framework and the identification of the diet levels. IDDSI is the only professionally recognized and supported diet framework as of October 2021.
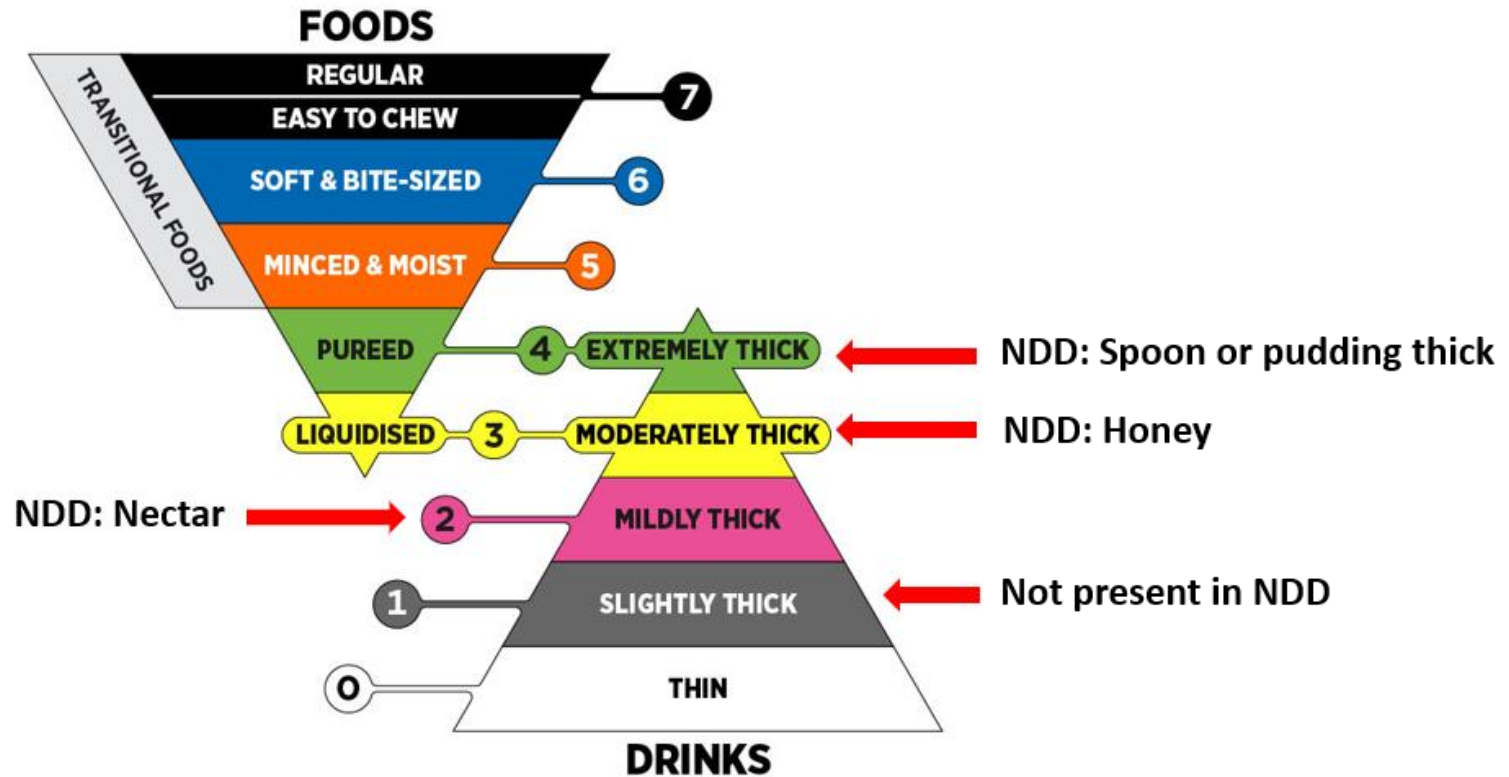
Comparing the NDD to the IDDSI Framework

NDD	IDDSI Framework
Generalized, subjective, undefined	Specific, objective measures of food/liquid
Limited evaluation tools for modified food and liquid consistencies	Standardized testing methods and tools for evaluation of modified food and liquid consistencies

1. Both NDD and IDDSI are based on modifying food and drink textures for people with chewing and/or swallowing difficulties (i.e., dysphagia).
2. The intention of the NDD was always to evolve and be revised pending new research and best practice. A systematic review (Steele et al., 2015, Dysphagia, 30(1): 2-26) found an urgent need to develop a global standardized terminology and definitions to describe texture modified foods and thickened liquids used for individuals with dysphagia of all ages, in all care settings, and all cultures.
3. NDD and IDDSI have some similar content. The final IDDSI framework consists of a continuum of 8 levels (0-7). Liquids and foods are tested using the IDDSI Testing Methods.
4. The NDD labels for drinks easily transition to the IDDSI labels. IDDSI created clearer labels and added more descriptions to the diet levels to assure food and drink safety.
   a. This labeling system has shown to facilitate education, allow accurate identification, and improve communication. For example, IDDSI identifies "Thin" Drinks as 0, White, Thin.

The 3 descriptors to identify IDDSI diet levels are:

Number, Color, and Label

Comparing the NDD and IDDSI levels

FOODS

TRANSITIONAL FOODS

- REGULAR — 7
- EASY TO CHEW
- SOFT & BITE-SIZED — 6
- MINCED & MOIST — 5
- PUREED — 4 — EXTREMELY THICK ← NDD: Spoon or pudding thick
- LIQUIDISED — 3 — MODERATELY THICK ← NDD: Honey
- NDD: Nectar → 2 — MILDLY THICK
- 1 — SLIGHTLY THICK ← Not present in NDD
- 0 — THIN

DRINKS

Comparing the NDD Levels to the IDDSI Food Levels

NDD, Level 1 Pureed → IDDSI, **Pureed, Level 4**

- The name and texture definition for puree in both NDD and IDDSI are similar.
- IDDSI lists additional descriptions and provides the *Spoon Tilt Test* as an objective testing method to assure safety of a pureed food product.

NDD, Level 2 Mechanically Altered → IDDSI, **Minced & Moist, Level 5**

- The NDD name of "Mechanically Altered" was hard to interpret and the description stated, *"moist," "minced," "cohesive,"* and *"easily mashed."*
- The IDDSI name of **"Minced & Moist"** is what NDD intended and is more descriptive of what food consistency the kitchens should produce.
- IDDSI provides testing suggestions for exact sizes of food pieces consistent with a safe swallow based on research in children and adults. Added moisture is *a must* to make this level moist, cohesive, and not crumbly!

NDD, Level 3 Dysphagia Advanced → IDDSI, **Soft & Bite Sized, Level 6**

- The NDD description stated, *"bite-sized," "soft," "moist,"* and *"not sticky."* However, bite size guidelines were larger than the typical diameter of an airway.
- The IDDSI name of "Soft & Bite Sized" is more descriptive of what food consistency the kitchens should produce.
- IDDSI provides testing suggestions based on the diameter of the average child and adult trachea for improved safety and prevention of choking.

OR

NDD, Level 3 Dysphagia Advanced → IDDSI, **Easy to Chew, Level 7**

- IDDSI's Easy to Chew, Level 7 is a sub-level of Regular, Level 7. Softer foods provided on the Easy to Chew, Level 7 that may align closely to NDD Level 3 or with *your* least restrictive texture modified diet.
- Easy to Chew, Level 7 has no particle size restrictions, so this level does not reduce a choking risk like Soft & Bite-sized, Level 6. The safety and suitability of breads & mixed consistencies is assessed on an individual basis.

For information on how to implement IDDSI in your facility, review the *How to Ease IDDSI Implementation* document. Visit the [IDDSI United States and Territories](#) page for this, and more NDD to IDDSI, documents.