

How do we keep children and adults with chewing or swallowing problems safe from choking?

For a range of reasons, some children and adults have trouble with feeding, chewing or swallowing. These problems can mean that food or drink get into the lungs and can cause chest infections like pneumonia. Sometimes the problems are very severe and regular foods and drinks can become a life-threatening choking risk. To keep children and adults with chewing or swallowing problems safe, food and drinks may be changed so that they are easier, or safer to swallow. Based on clinical assessment, food might be chopped, minced or pureed and drinks might be thickened. The way we name and describe the modified foods and drinks is really important, to make sure each person receives the food texture and drink thickness that is safe for them.

What is IDDSI?

- The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) Framework was developed to provide safety, through a global standardised way of naming and describing food texture and drink thickness for people with swallowing difficulties across the lifespan
- It is a person-centred rather than profession-centred approach
- IDDSI provides practical and validated measurement techniques to make sure that foods and drinks prepared in hospital, at home or bought as pre-packaged products, can safely be used for people with swallowing problems.
- IDDSI uses simple, quick, portable, reliable measures rather than relying on descriptions like 'soft', to make sure that foods and drinks are safe. Children and adults have choked and died on food textures that were not appropriate for their swallowing needs.
- You can read more about the IDDSI framework, at www.IDDSI.org



? How thick is “thick”?
How soft is “soft”?
How small is “small”?

! IDDSI includes specific measurements that aim to minimise the need for personal subjective judgement



Why are we changing from the Australian terminology to IDDSI?

We are changing from the Australian National Standards for texture modified food and thick drinks that were published in 2007 and no longer reflect current evidence. The IDDSI Framework represents global, evidence based best practice. IDDSI has adopted an AWARE-PREPARE-ADOPT strategy to assist with implementation. Australia is currently in the PREPARE phase and is set to ADOPT on 1 May 2019.

For more information

or to join the Australian IDDSI email list
Please contact:

Australian IDDSI Project Officer
Dr Julie Cichero, PhD
Email: australia@iddsi.org

