

# Dysphagia Supplement

September 2018

## Background

People with swallowing difficulty (dysphagia) should have food and fluids in a form that can be swallowed without aspiration and have adequate mealtime support. Some people with dysphagia need texture modified food and/or thickened drinks. Thickeners can be prescribed if appropriate to help modify the consistency of foods and fluids. The recommendation to prescribe a thickener should come from an appropriately trained healthcare professional, e.g. a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) after a diagnosis of dysphagia has been made. The person's management plan should contain clear documented details of the consistency of fluids and foods that the person is able to manage, as per SLT assessment. **People with dysphagia must receive their recommended fluid and food consistency in order to reduce the risk of complications such as choking and aspiration.**

## New Standards for Texture Modified Foods and Thickened Liquids International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI)

The way in which dysphagia diets are categorised is changing. It is important that healthcare professionals are aware of the change and what this means to people with dysphagia.

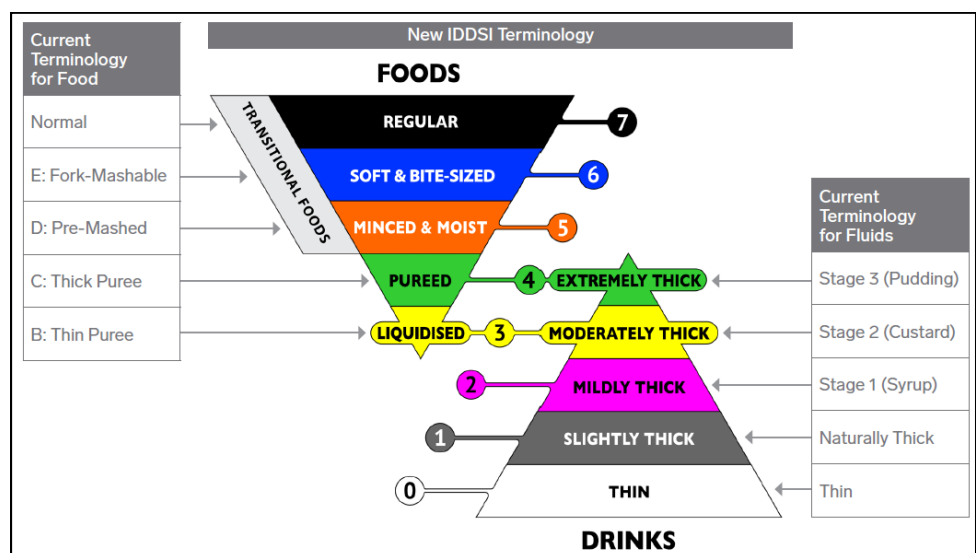
Current UK descriptors of texture modified foods are based on a consensus of expert opinion and are subjective, e.g. fork mashable diet. Furthermore, fluids are not addressed in the current UK descriptors.

A new way of describing texture modified foods and thickened liquids is being rolled out across the UK from April 2018 to April 2019: the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI). The IDDSI framework

consists of a continuum of eight levels (0 - 7) and includes descriptors, testing methods and evidence for both drink thickness and food texture levels.

Further information on IDDSI can be found at <http://iddsi.org/> or by downloading the App.

It is hoped that the use of IDDSI will improve patient safety by ensuring that patients receive the correct fluid and food consistencies.



## What is happening locally?

- IDDSI compliant products will become available in pharmacies (some brands are already available) — see next page for more information.
- New patients will be given IDDSI descriptors when they receive their SLT assessment.
- Patients with a current diagnosis of dysphagia will not routinely require SLT review in order to move to the new IDDSI descriptors as conversion aids are available — see above and next page for more information. An SLT review should only be required if there is a clinical need, e.g. patient is not managing their IDDSI descriptor.
- Further resources can be found on the [Public Health Agency website](#) and [Department of Health website](#).

## Changes to thickener products

IDDSI is to be rolled out across the UK between April 2018 and April 2019. In line with this, manufacturers of dysphagia products (and caterers supplying texture modified diets) will make changes to their products to ensure they are IDDSI compliant. **This will mean a change to the labelling of the products and, for some products, a change in scoop size also.** It is likely to take several months for all products to be changed over to the IDDSI descriptors. There will be a **cross over period** between products and swallow recommendations, so it is important there is understanding of what IDDSI means for both existing patients and new ones. The table below gives an indication of timescales for the roll out of IDDSI compliant products.

Please note that product labels will move directly to IDDSI, i.e. there will be **no transition labels on products.** However, the companies have produced additional information for each thickener, including conversion charts, to guide transition from previous descriptors to IDDSI descriptors. This additional information can be found on the companies website or by contacting a local representative.

Product	Company	Planned date of introduction of IDDSI compliant product	Change to scoop size?
Nutlis® Clear powder	Nutricia <a href="http://nutlis.com">http://nutlis.com</a>	Sep — Oct 2018	Yes (3g to 1.25g)
Nutlis® powder		Feb 2019	Yes (4g to tbc)
Resource Thicken Up® Clear powder	Nestle <a href="http://www.nestlehealthscience.co.uk">www.nestlehealthscience.co.uk</a>	Jun 2018	No (1.2g)
Resource Thicken Up® powder		To be confirmed	To be confirmed — currently 4.5g
Thick & Easy® Clear powder	Fresenius-Kabi <a href="http://dysphagia.org.uk/">http://dysphagia.org.uk/</a>	Jan — Mar 2019	No (1.4g)
Thick & Easy® powder		Jan — Mar 2019	Yes (4.5g to 1.5g)
Swallowze Clear Instant Food and Fluid powder®	Nualtra <a href="http://www.swallowzecclear.com/">www.swallowzecclear.com/</a>	Jun 2018	Yes (1.8g to 1.6g)
Thicken Aid®	M & A Pharmachem Ltd <a href="http://www.thickenaid.co.uk/">www.thickenaid.co.uk/</a>	Jan 2019	To be confirmed — currently 4.5g

## Actions for primary care

### GP practices

- Provide patients, carers and nursing / residential homes with information for their thickener to guide transition from previous descriptors to IDDSI descriptors.
- Liaise with SLT if there is a clinical need, e.g. patient is not managing the matched IDDSI descriptor.

### Community pharmacies

- Inform patients, carers and nursing / residential homes on the change to the new labelling and mixing instructions and the need to follow the new directions on the tin.
- Ensure patients, carers and nursing / residential homes are given the patient information resources that are provided by the respective nutritional company at the point of dispensing in order to guide transition from previous descriptors to IDDSI descriptors.
- If the IDDSI compliant product has a new scoop, ensure patient is counselled to use the new scoop and to discard the old one. There is a risk of patient receiving the incorrect thickness if the wrong scoop is used.
- If ordering a parallel import (PI) for a thickener, ensure that the PI is IDDSI compliant once the UK product has changed over to IDDSI — see table above for timescales (or order as UK product). While IDDSI is the recognised international descriptor, not every country has adopted it and there is a risk of patients receiving incorrect mixing instructions or incorrect scoop size if non-IDDSI compliant products are supplied.

This newsletter has been produced for GPs and pharmacists by the Regional Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team. **Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication.**  
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