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Speech and Language Therapy Service

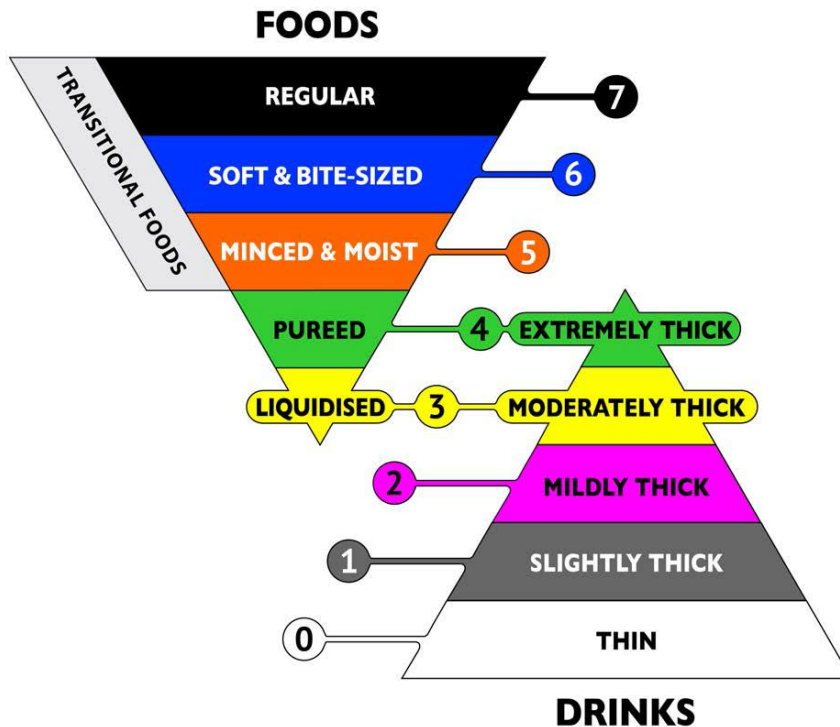
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RE: Adoption of the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) Framework

This letter aims to inform you of an impending change to the way in which dysphagia diets are categorised in the future. It is important that you and other health care professionals are aware of the change and what this means for your patients with dysphagia.

The vast majority of care settings in the UK currently use the UK Dysphagia Diet Food Texture Descriptors to describe the consistency of foods for people with dysphagia. We will no longer refer to national descriptors e.g. Fork Mashable Diet when making diet recommendations and the fluid stages currently used e.g. stage 1 fluid, will also no longer be used. We will be adopting the International Diet Descriptor standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) when making formal swallowing recommendations.

The IDDSI framework contains definitions for texture modified foods and thickened fluids for people with dysphagia. The IDDSI has a continuum of eight levels (0-7) covering both food and fluid textures and includes descriptors, testing methods and the evidence base for these recommendations.



Many countries across the world including the USA, Australia and Canada have adopted the IDDSI framework so far.

Following a comprehensive analysis of the evidence of the IDDSI framework, both the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapist (RCSLT) and British Dietetic Association (BDA), have independently and formally announced that they support the adoption of the IDDSI framework. Therefore, there will be a Trust wide transition over to the IDDSI, with other Trusts across the UK already successfully using the IDDSI framework.

The IDDSI has found to have great benefits, including:

- Improving patient safety (e.g. common international terminology for patients and health professionals moving between countries ensuring patients receive the correct textures and safe; product labels will also be international)
- Greater opportunities to collect and evaluate treatment outcomes (due to international standardised terminologies, larger cohorts of patients can be compared in research to evaluate the effects of existing and new treatments)

- A continuum of descriptors for both texture modified food and fluids. Fluid is currently not addressed by National UK descriptors.
- IDDSI is based on a clinical evidence base - the current UK Descriptors are based on expert consensus

This transition will fully complete by 1st April 2019, although some manufacturers (e.g. Thick and Easy) have started to change their labelling to reflect IDDSI terminology. There will undoubtedly be a cross over period between products (e.g. Thick and Easy) and swallow recommendations, so it is important there is collective understanding on what the IDDSI means for both existing patients and new ones.

We recognise that this is a significant change to everyone's practice so please feel free to contact your local SLT department if you have any questions or queries.

Yours Sincerely

The Royal Devon and Exeter Adult Speech and Language Therapy Team