SNF SLP RESOURCES

Texture-Modified Diet Kit for Nursing Staff

A practical way to match the tray and the cup to the diet order.
Based on the IDDSI framework.

INSIDE THIS KIT

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The in-service slides are a separate PowerPoint file in this kit.

Permission to print and laminate for one facility (one SNF / one campus). Not for resale or multi-campus use. These are not official IDDSI resources and do not replace materials at iddsi.org. See Required notices.

How to use this kit

This kit helps staff match the tray and cup to the diet order and stop if an item does not meet that level. It does not replace a swallow evaluation, diet order, allergy information, or care plan. Staff do not change a diet level on their own.

BEFORE EACH TEXTURE-MODIFIED MEAL OR THICKENED DRINK

1. Check the current order. Confirm food and drink separately.
2. Look at the tray and cup in front of you, at serving temperature.
3. For food, if unsure, use the checklist and the fork or spoon tests for that level.
4. For drinks, match the labeled or prepared drink to the ordered level. Use official look/pour cues. Do not invent a measurement.
5. If any check is No, the label does not match, or you are unsure, do not serve. Contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document.

> Facility words such as chopped, ground, nectar, or honey vary; do not assume they match an IDDSI level. This kit uses adult measures. The syringe Flow Test is not a routine nursing task; see Appendix B.

Food texture and drink thickness are separate orders. Official wording for each level is in Appendix A.

Required notices

> These are NOT official IDDSI resources, educational materials or education programs and they are NOT meant to replace materials and resources on www.IDDSI.org.

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This kit is general educational information, not a diet order or medical advice. A person's diet order, allergy information, and clinician guidance always come first. Do not use the IDDSI logo, or “IDDSI certified,” “IDDSI compliant,” or “IDDSI approved.” Safer wording: “based on the IDDSI framework.”

Sources: IDDSI Detailed Definitions 2.2 and Testing Methods 2.0, at https://iddsi.org/framework. Food tests: https://iddsi.org/framework/food-testing-methods/. Drink tests: https://iddsi.org/framework/drink-testing-methods/.

Level colors used on these pages are the official IDDSI RGB values from the IDDSI Colour codes document (released September 2019). Official diagrams are not reproduced here.

Staff-page footer: “See Required notices. Official wording: Appendix A.”

4

LEVEL 4

Pureed

Confirm the current **food** order. Drink thickness is a separate order. Check at serving temperature. This kit uses adult measures.

- [ ] The food order is Level 4 Pureed.
- [ ] No lumps.
- [ ] Liquid has not separated from the solid.
- [ ] Not sticky. A full spoonful plops off when the spoon is turned sideways.
- [ ] Sits in a mound on the fork. Does not drip continuously through the prongs.
- [ ] Cannot be drunk from a cup or sucked through a straw.

IF ANY CHECK IS NO

Do not serve. Contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document.

Facility contact: _____

5

LEVEL 5

Minced & Moist

Confirm the current **food** order. Drink thickness is a separate order. Check at serving temperature. This kit uses adult measures.

- [ ] The food order is Level 5 Minced & Moist.
- [ ] Soft and moist, with no separate thin liquid in the dish.
- [ ] Adult lumps: no more than 4 mm wide and 15 mm long. Use the fork-prong gap (about 4 mm) for width.
- [ ] Particles easily separate and come through the prongs.
- [ ] Easily mashed with little fork pressure. Do not press hard enough to blanch the thumbnail.
- [ ] When scooped, it sits in a pile on the fork and does not easily fall through.
- [ ] Holds its shape on a spoon, then slides off when tilted. Not sticky.

IF ANY CHECK IS NO

Do not serve. Contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document.

Facility contact: _____

6

LEVEL 6

Soft & Bite-Sized

> Confirm the current **food** order. Drink thickness is a separate order. Check at serving temperature. This kit uses adult measures.

- [ ] The food order is Level 6 Soft & Bite-Sized.
- [ ] Soft, tender, and moist throughout, with no separate thin liquid.
- [ ] Adult pieces no larger than 1.5 cm × 1.5 cm (about a thumbnail, or the width of a standard fork).
- [ ] Softness: a 1.5 cm piece, pressed until the thumbnail blanches white, squashes, breaks apart, and does not return to shape.
- [ ] It has passed **both** the piece-size test and the softness test.
- [ ] No regular dry bread, sandwich, or toast of any kind.

Do not recode the diet if a piece is too firm or too large.

IF ANY CHECK IS NO

Do not serve. Contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document.

Facility contact: _____

7

LEVEL 7

Easy to Chew

> Use only when the food order is Level 7 Easy to Chew, not Regular. Confirm the current **food** order. Drink thickness is a separate order. Check at serving temperature. This kit uses adult measures.

- [ ] The order is Level 7 Easy to Chew.
- [ ] Soft/tender everyday textures. No hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, crunchy, or crumbly bits, pips, seeds, fibrous parts of fruit, husks, or bones.
- [ ] A 1.5 cm piece, pressed until the thumbnail blanches white, squashes, breaks apart, and does not return to shape.
- [ ] Breaks apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon.
- [ ] Supervision follows the written care plan or SLP instructions. Staff do not drop supervision on their own.
- [ ] Bread, sandwiches, or toast only if the clinician has allowed them and they can be cut or broken apart with the side of a fork or spoon.
- [ ] Mixed-consistency items only if they match the written order and clinician guidance.

Piece size is not restricted, but the food must still pass the fork pressure test.

IF ANY CHECK IS NO

Do not serve. Contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document.

Facility contact: _____

7

LEVEL 7

Regular

Use only when the food order is Level 7 Regular. Official testing is not applicable. This is an order-matching check, not a fork-pressure test. Drink thickness is a separate order.

- [ ] The order is Level 7 Regular, not Easy to Chew and not Level 4, 5, or 6.
- [ ] The tray is a regular, everyday-texture tray. If it has been texture-modified and the order is Regular, stop and clarify before serving.
- [ ] Check the drink against the drink checklist if a thickness is ordered.
- [ ] Follow any resident-specific restrictions in the care plan (allergies, supervision, equipment).

Do not use Easy to Chew or Level 6 tests to fail everyday textures on a Regular order. If you are unsure which Level 7 is ordered, check the order or contact the SLP.

IF ANY CHECK IS NO

Do not serve. Contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document.

Facility contact: _____

Drinks · Thin to Mildly Thick

Confirm the current **drink** order first. Food is a separate order. Check at serving temperature. Match a packaged or pre-thickened label to the order. Use only the official look/pour cues below; do not invent pour times or other measurements.

0

LEVEL 0

Thin

- [ ] The drink order is Level 0 Thin.
- [ ] The label matches the order, or an unlabeled thin drink (such as water ordered as Thin) is consistent with that order.
- [ ] Look/pour: Flows like water. Fast flow.

1

LEVEL 1

Slightly Thick

- [ ] The drink order is Level 1 Slightly Thick.
- [ ] The label matches the order.
- [ ] Look/pour: Thicker than water. Requires a little more effort to drink than thin liquids. Flows through a straw.

2

LEVEL 2

Mildly Thick

- [ ] The drink order is Level 2 Mildly Thick.
- [ ] The label matches the order.
- [ ] Look/pour: Flows off a spoon. Sippable, pours quickly from a spoon, but slower than thin drinks.

IF THE LABEL DOES NOT MATCH, THE LOOK OR POUR SEEMS WRONG, OR YOU ARE UNSURE

Do not serve; call the SLP, and document.

Facility contact: _____

Drinks · Moderately to Extremely Thick

Confirm the current **drink** order first. Food is a separate order. Check at serving temperature. Match a packaged or pre-thickened label to the order. Use only the official look/pour cues below; do not invent pour times or other measurements.

3

LEVEL 3

Moderately Thick

- [ ] The drink order is Level 3 Moderately Thick.
- [ ] The label matches the order.
- [ ] Look/pour: Can be drunk from a cup. Smooth texture with no “bits.” Can be eaten with a spoon. Easily pours from spoon when tilted; does not stick to spoon.

4

LEVEL 4

Extremely Thick

This is a separate order from Level 4 Pureed food, even when the look is similar. No syringe.

- [ ] The drink order is Level 4 Extremely Thick.
- [ ] The label matches the order.
- [ ] Look/pour: Cannot be drunk from a cup because it does not flow easily. Cannot be sucked through a straw. Usually eaten with a spoon. No lumps. Not sticky. Liquid must not separate from solid.

IF THE LABEL DOES NOT MATCH, THE LOOK OR POUR SEEMS WRONG, OR YOU ARE UNSURE

Do not serve; call the SLP, and document.

Facility contact: _____

Print this page and the next two-sided, flip on the long edge. Cut along the crop marks. Laminate if desired. Two identical cards are on the sheet.

SNF SLP RESOURCES · POCKET CARD · FRONT

Foods

Confirm the food order. Test the food in front of you, at serving temperature.

- Fork pressure: thumb on the bowl of the fork, just above the prongs.
- Level 5: light pressure only. Do not blanch the thumbnail. Adult lumps no more than 4 mm wide and 15 mm long. Use the fork-prong gap.
- Level 6 and Level 7 Easy to Chew: press until the thumbnail blanches white. A 1.5 cm piece squashes, breaks apart, and does not return to shape.
- Level 6 must pass **both** piece size (no larger than 1.5 cm) and softness.
- Easy to Chew: piece size is not restricted, but the food must also break apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon.
- Level 7 Regular: no fork-pressure test. Do not use these tests to reject everyday Regular textures.

See Required notices. If it fails or you are unsure, do not serve.

SNF SLP RESOURCES · POCKET CARD · FRONT

Foods

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- Fork pressure: thumb on the bowl of the fork, just above the prongs.
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- Level 7 Regular: no fork-pressure test. Do not use these tests to reject everyday Regular textures.

See Required notices. If it fails or you are unsure, do not serve.

Back of the pocket card. Print two-sided with the previous page, flip on the long edge, then cut along the crop marks.

SNF SLP RESOURCES · POCKET CARD · BACK

Spoon, fork drip, and drinks

- Spoon tilt (food Levels 4 and 5): holds shape on the spoon, then plops or slides off. A thin film is acceptable. Should not be firm and sticky.
- Level 4 fork drip: sits in a mound on the fork; may form a short tail; does not drip continuously.
- Level 5 fork drip: sits in a pile on the fork; does not easily fall through.

Drinks (no syringe)

- Confirm the order and match the label or prepared drink.
- Look/pour: Level 0 flows like water. Level 1 is thicker than water and still flows through a straw. Level 2 pours quickly from a spoon, but slower than thin drinks. Level 3 can be drunk from a cup and easily pours from a tilted spoon. Level 4 cannot be drunk from a cup and is usually taken with a spoon.
- If the label does not match, the look or pour seems wrong, or you are unsure, do not serve. Call the SLP.

See Required notices. If it fails or you are unsure, do not serve.

SNF SLP RESOURCES · POCKET CARD · BACK

Spoon, fork drip, and drinks

- Spoon tilt (food Levels 4 and 5): holds shape on the spoon, then plops or slides off. A thin film is acceptable. Should not be firm and sticky.
- Level 4 fork drip: sits in a mound on the fork; may form a short tail; does not drip continuously.
- Level 5 fork drip: sits in a pile on the fork; does not easily fall through.

Drinks (no syringe)

- Confirm the order and match the label or prepared drink.
- Look/pour: Level 0 flows like water. Level 1 is thicker than water and still flows through a straw. Level 2 pours quickly from a spoon, but slower than thin drinks. Level 3 can be drunk from a cup and easily pours from a tilted spoon. Level 4 cannot be drunk from a cup and is usually taken with a spoon.
- If the label does not match, the look or pour seems wrong, or you are unsure, do not serve. Call the SLP.

See Required notices. If it fails or you are unsure, do not serve.

Texture-Modified Meals and Drinks

Match the tray and the cup to the order. Food and drink are separate orders.

FOODS

7	**Regular —** Everyday textures; no texture restrictions; no fork-pressure test.
7	**Easy to Chew —** Soft/tender only; must break apart easily and pass the fork pressure test; not the same as Regular.
6	**Soft & Bite-Sized —** Soft, tender, moist; adult pieces no larger than 1.5 cm; must pass size and softness; no regular dry bread, sandwiches, or toast.
5	**Minced & Moist —** Soft and moist; no separate thin liquid; adult lumps no more than 4 mm wide and 15 mm long.
4	**Pureed —** No lumps; not sticky; liquid must not separate from solid.

DRINKS — MATCH THE LABEL OR PREPARED DRINK TO THE ORDER. USE OFFICIAL LOOK/POUR CUES. IF UNSURE, CALL THE SLP.

0	**Thin —** Flows like water.
1	**Slightly Thick —** Thicker than water; still flows through a straw.
2	**Mildly Thick —** Sippable; pours quickly from a spoon, but slower than thin drinks.
3	**Moderately Thick —** Can be drunk from a cup; easily pours from a tilted spoon.
4	**Extremely Thick —** Cannot be drunk from a cup; usually taken with a spoon.

Facility words such as chopped, ground, nectar, or honey vary. Follow the IDDSI level on the order.

When in Doubt, Check — Then Call

1. Check the current order — food and drink separately.
2. Look at the actual tray and cup. Match a drink label to the order.
3. If unsure about food, use the fork or spoon test for that level, at serving temperature. If unsure about a drink, use official look/pour cues. Do not invent a measurement.
4. If any check is No, the label does not match, or you are unsure, do not serve. Contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document.

DO NOT CHANGE THE DIET LEVEL

Stopping a tray or cup that does not match the order is the correct action.

In-Service Sign-In

Texture-Modified Diet Kit for Nursing Staff

Facility: _____ Unit: _____

Date: _____ Presented by: _____

Topic: Matching texture-modified trays and drinks to the diet order (food Levels 4–7; drink Levels 0–4).

I attended this in-service. These are not official IDDSI materials. The resident's diet order and clinician guidance come first. I will not serve a food or drink that does not match the order, fails a required check, or that I am unsure about.

NAME (PRINT)	ROLE (RN, LPN, CNA, OTHER)	SIGNATURE

Quick Check

Texture-Modified Diets for Nursing Staff

Name: _____ Date: _____

Unit: _____

Circle one answer. If unsure on the floor, do not serve; ask the SLP.

1. For an adult on Level 5 Minced & Moist, official lump size is:

A. No larger than 1.5 cm × 1.5 cm
B. Equal to or less than 4 mm width and no longer than 15 mm in length
C. Any size, as long as the food is soft
D. There is no official size at this level

2. Officially, Level 6 Soft & Bite-Sized food must:

A. Pass the piece-size test only
B. Pass the softness test only
C. Pass both the food piece size test and the softness test
D. Be mashed with light pressure that does not blanch the thumbnail

3. When serving a thickened drink, the first practical check is:

A. Guess thickness from facility words such as nectar or honey
B. Match the label or prepared drink to the order, then use official look/pour cues; if unsure, do not serve and call the SLP
C. Change the drink order in the chart if the cup looks close enough
D. Skip the drink order if the food on the tray is correct

4. Officially, a Level 4 Extremely Thick drink:

A. Flows like water and can be sipped quickly from a cup
B. Pours quickly from a spoon, but slower than thin drinks
C. Cannot be drunk from a cup because it does not flow easily, and is usually taken with a spoon
D. Needs no check if the carton looks thick

5. If a tray or cup does not match the order, a required check is not met, or you are unsure:

A. Serve it if the resident usually manages that food or drink
B. Change the diet level in the chart and then serve
C. Do not serve; contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian, and document
D. Serve one item and hold the other without checking the second order

SLP ONLY — do not hang as a poster or give as a staff handout

Quick Check · Answer key

1. B

Official adult Level 5 size.

2. C

Must pass both size and softness.

3. B

Match the label or prepared drink to the order; official look/pour cues; call the SLP if unsure.

4. C

Cannot be drunk from a cup; usually taken with a spoon.

5. C

Do not serve; contact the kitchen, SLP, or dietitian; document. Staff do not change the diet level.

Official IDDSI wording

Quoted from IDDSI Detailed Definitions 2.2 and Testing Methods 2.0. Do not modify these descriptors. See https://iddsi.org/framework.

4 Level 4 Pureed / Extremely Thick

Usually eaten with a spoon (a fork is possible). Cannot be drunk from a cup because it does not flow easily. Cannot be sucked through a straw. Does not require chewing. No lumps. Not sticky. Liquid must not separate from solid. Falls off spoon in a single spoonful when tilted and continues to hold shape on a plate. The IDDSI Flow test is not applicable; use the Fork Drip Test and Spoon Tilt Test.

5 Level 5 Minced & Moist

Soft and moist with no separate thin liquid. Small lumps visible within the food. Adult, equal to or less than 4mm width and no longer than 15mm in length. When pressed with a fork the particles should easily be separated between and come through the tines/prongs of a fork. Can be easily mashed with little pressure from a fork [pressure should not make the thumb nail blanch to white]. When a sample is scooped with a fork it sits in a pile or can mound on the fork and does not easily or completely flow or fall through the tines/prongs of a fork. Use the slot between fork prongs (4mm) to determine whether minced pieces are the correct or incorrect size.

6 Level 6 Soft & Bite-Sized

Soft, tender and moist throughout but with no separate thin liquid. Chewing is required before swallowing. Adults, 15 mm = 1.5 cm pieces (no larger than). Soft & Bite-Sized food must pass both food piece size and softness tests. No regular dry bread, sandwiches or toast of any kind. If texture cannot be served soft and tender at 1.5 cm x 1.5 cm (as confirmed with fork/spoon pressure test), serve minced and moist.

7 Level 7 Easy to Chew

Normal, everyday foods of soft/tender textures that are developmentally and age appropriate. Sample size is not restricted at Level 7. Does not include: hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, crunchy, or crumbly bits, pips, seeds, fibrous parts of fruit, husks or bones. May include ‘dual consistency’ or ‘mixed consistency’ foods and liquids if also safe for Level 0, and at clinician discretion. This level could present a choking risk for people with clinically identified increased risk of choking, because food pieces can be of any size. If the person needs supervision to eat safely, before using this texture level consult a qualified clinician. Where mealtime supervision is needed, this level should only be used under the strict recommendation and written guidance of a qualified clinician. Easy to Chew foods must break apart easily with the side of a fork or spoon and pass Fork Pressure Test. Bread, sandwiches and toast that can be cut or broken apart into smaller pieces with the side of a fork or spoon can be provided at clinician discretion.

7 Level 7 Regular

Normal, everyday foods of various textures that are developmentally and age appropriate. Foods may be hard and crunchy or naturally soft. Sample size is not restricted at Level 7. There are NO texture restrictions at this level. Includes hard, tough, chewy, fibrous, stringy, dry, crispy, crunchy, or crumbly bits. Includes food that contains pips, seeds, pith inside skin, husks or bones. Includes ‘dual consistency’ or ‘mixed consistency’ foods and liquids. Testing method: Not Applicable.

Official IDDSI wording, continued

0 Level 0 Thin

Flows like water. Fast flow. Can drink through any type of teat/nipple, cup or straw as appropriate for age and skills.

1 Level 1 Slightly Thick

Thicker than water. Requires a little more effort to drink than thin liquids. Flows through a straw, syringe, teat/nipple. Similar to the thickness of most commercially available ‘Anti-regurgitation’ (AR) infant formulas.

2 Level 2 Mildly Thick

Flows off a spoon. Sippable, pours quickly from a spoon, but slower than thin drinks.

3 Level 3 Moderately Thick / Liquidised

Can be drunk from a cup. Cannot be eaten with a fork because it drips slowly in dollops through the prongs. Can be eaten with a spoon. Smooth texture with no ‘bits’ (lumps, fibers, bits of shell or skin, husk, particles of gristle or bone). Fork Drip Test: Drips slowly in dollops through the prongs of a fork. Spoon Tilt Test: Easily pours from spoon when tilted; does not stick to spoon.

Official tests (quoted once)

Fork pressure method (Testing Methods 2.0): press by placing the thumb onto the bowl of the fork (just above the prongs) until the thumbnail blanches noticeably to white. That pressure has been measured at about 17 kPa. Used at Level 6 and Level 7 Easy to Chew: When a sample the size of a thumb nail (1.5x1.5 cm) is pressed with the tines of a fork to a pressure where the thumb nail blanches to white, the sample squashes, breaks apart, changes shape, and does not return to its original shape when the fork is removed.

Level 4 Fork drip: sample sits in a mound/pile above the fork; a small amount may flow through and form a short tail below the fork tines/prongs, but it does not flow or drip continuously through the prongs of a fork.

Level 4 and Level 5 Spoon tilt: cohesive enough to hold its shape on the spoon. A full spoonful must plop off the spoon if the spoon is titled or turned sideways; a very gentle flick (using only fingers and wrist) may be necessary to dislodge the sample from the spoon, but the sample should slide off easily with very little food left on the spoon. A thin film remaining on the spoon after the Spoon Tilt Test is acceptable, however, you should still be able to see the spoon through the thin film; i.e. the sample should not be firm and sticky. Indicators that a sample is too thick: does not fall off the spoon when tilted; sticks to spoon. For Level 5, a full spoonful must slide/pour off/fall off the spoon if the spoon is tilted or turned sideways or shaken lightly; the sample should slide off easily with very little food left on the spoon; i.e. the sample should not be sticky.

Level 4 Extremely Thick drinks: For extremely thick drinks (Level 4), that do not flow through a 10 mL syringe in 10 seconds and are best consumed with a spoon, the IDDSI Fork Drip Test and/or Spoon Tilt Test are recommended as methods for determining consistency.

SLP REFERENCE ONLY — do not hang as a poster or print as a CNA card

Official Flow Test

Nursing staff are not expected to run the syringe Flow Test as a routine unit task.

For drink Levels 0–3, the official method is the IDDSI Flow Test: a 10 mL slip tip syringe with a 61.5 mm scale from the zero line to the 10 mL line, reading how much remains after 10 seconds of flow. For Level 4 Extremely Thick drinks, the Flow Test is not applicable; use Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt. These drinks are best consumed with a spoon.

Official steps, syringe specifications, remaining-volume results, and videos: https://iddsi.org/framework/drink-testing-methods/ and https://iddsi.org/framework. Do not invent remaining-volume shortcuts or pour-time thresholds for nursing staff. If a drink does not match the order, or anyone is unsure, do not serve; call the SLP, dietitian, or kitchen.

See Required notices.