

About IDDSI Level 4 (Pureed / Extremely Thick)

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) is a global project that gives standardized terms, definitions, and testing methods for modified foods and liquids that could be recommended for a person with dysphagia.

IDDSI Level 4 is used to describe either foods, drinks, or both. It is described as pureed and extremely thick.

Level 7: Regular

Level 6: Soft and Bite-Sized

Level 4: Pureed / Extremely Thick

Level 2: Mildly Thick

Level 1: Slightly Thick

Level 7: Easy-to-chew, Regular

Level 5: Minced + Moist

Level 3: Liquidised / Moderately Thick

Level 0: Thin

Understanding IDDSI Level 4:

- ✓ **How do you eat it?** IDDSI Level 4 foods are eaten with a spoon or fork. They can not be sipped from a cup or straw because they are too thick. No chewing is needed.
- ✓ **What happens if you scoop it with a fork?** If you scoop an IDDSI Level 4 food with a fork, it will mainly stay in a pile on the fork (it won't all fall through).
- ✓ **What happens if you tilt a spoonful of it?** If you have a spoonful of an IDDSI Level 4 food and tilt the spoon, the food will hold its shape as it falls off the spoon. There might be some food left on the spoon, but not a lot.

Learn more:

- ✓ [IDDSI Level 4 Patient Handout](#)

Reference: The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2019 @ <https://iddsi.org/framework>.

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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Food Examples

IDDSI Level 4 is used to describe either foods, drinks, or both. It is described as pureed and extremely thick. The best way to know if your item is the right level is to check:

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- ✓ **What happens if you tilt a spoonful of it?** If you have a spoonful of an IDDSI Level 4 food and tilt the spoon, the food will hold its shape as it falls off the spoon. There might be some food left on the spoon, but not a lot.



There are several items that may be naturally consistent with IDDSI Level 4.

- ✓ Cream of wheat
- ✓ Yogurt
- ✓ Puddings or custards
- ✓ Pureed fruits or veggies

Other items will need to be modified to be consistent with pureed/ extremely thick foods. *Can you add examples from your own preferred foods?*

Watch out for:

- ✓ Sticky foods (example: peanut butter)
- ✓ Foods that form a crust when cooked (example: mashed potatoes)

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Evaluate a Food or Drink

IDDSI Level 4 is used to describe either foods, drinks, or both. It is described as pureed and extremely thick. Use the following questions to decide if this food is an IDDSI Level 4 food. Pick some foods or drinks to evaluate:

✓ Does it look smooth (no lumps)?

✓ How do you eat it?

✓ What happens if you scoop it with a fork?

✓ What happens if you tilt a spoonful of it?

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Test Yourself

Which of these foods would be consistent with IDDSI Level 4? Why or why not?



What foods do you want to evaluate for your own eating?

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Make-Your-Own Menu Ideas

First, describe your mealtimes. Then, create your menu ideas for the different meal activities you participate in.

Describe mealtimes:

Menu Ideas:

Learn more:

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Making Foods Pureed / Extremely Thick

Tools that may help puree foods:

- ✓ Blender
- ✓ Food processor
- ✓ Immersion blender
- ✓ Strainer / Sieve

What if it's too thick?

- ✓ Add liquid. Consider flavored liquid (broth, coconut milk) that might help the taste.
- ✓ Consider adding oil / fats to make a puree smooth / glossy instead of gritty.

What if it's too thin?

- ✓ Add more solids.
- ✓ Consider adding an absorbent solid like oats or bread if it works with the recipe.

How do I test it?

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- ✓ **What happens if you tilt a spoonful of it?** If you have a spoonful of an IDDSI Level 4 food and tilt the spoon, the food will hold its shape as it falls off the spoon. There might be some food left on the spoon, but not a lot.

Resources:

- ✓ [A Practical Guide for Pureeing Food At Home \(Eat, Speak, Think\)](#)
- ✓ [How to Puree Foods from University of Virginia](#)

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