



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL IDDSI MENU

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- 1. Work with your Speech Language Pathologist (SLP):** SLPs specialize in handling swallowing and chewing problems. They can help answer questions regarding mixed consistencies/diets.
- 2. Consider mixed consistencies/textures:** The issue with mixed consistencies is the separation of liquids and as a rule are more challenging to swallow. IDDSI testing can be performed, however this needs to be done by separating the components. Learn more at iddsi.org.
- 3. Try to keep the foods as close to their original form as possible:** Nothing is worse than having a plate arrive to find it's a scoop of pureed bread and pureed cabbage. Try to use soft vegetables. If possible, use canned.
- 4. Use gravy when appropriate for the individual:** Using gravy helps food by providing moisture, flavor, and nutrition, and makes chewing easier for most patients. The FAQ page on the IDDSI website addresses gravy questions.
- 5. Minimize bread products:** Bread products have proven to be one of the most difficult items to eat for patients with swallowing problems. When menu planning, consider the amount of bread required depending on the IDDSI levels of those you serve. Visit iddsi.org/FAQ/Foods for more information.
- 6. Use instant mashed potatoes if needed:** Instant mashed potatoes are often one of the most-liked products for patients. Not only do patients enjoy them, but they are traditionally easy to fix on the fly and are cost effective.
- 7. Make sure your facility has a good blender or food processor:** This makes life easier when chopping tough-to-chew foods.
- 8. Avoid hard-to-chew meats and grilling when possible:** These food items traditionally lose their moisture when cooking, making them hard to chew and swallow. When possible, cook in a sauce, or prep ahead of time.
- 9. Canned fruits and vegetables are your friend:** These items have been precooked and will be softer than their fresh counterparts. Visit iddsi.org/FAQ/Foods for more information.
- 10. Always use a variety of color on your plate:** When building your menu, make sure to include a number of different colors on the plate to add interest.