

## In the recommended food lists provided for each diet texture, are all food items listed?

No. These are lists of examples only. It is impossible to provide a detailed list of all the foods that are recommended or to be avoided, due to the variety of food types and cooking methods available. If a food should be avoided in one diet texture, then it should also be avoided in all the more modified texture diets. For example, food that should be avoided in *Texture A – Soft diet* should also be avoided in *Texture B – Minced and Moist diet*. Some of the foods listed for each diet texture may not be traditionally associated with that particular diet. Referring to the descriptions and characteristics of each diet texture should help clarify why a food may or may not be included.

Remember these are the lists provided in the Australian Standardised Definitions and Terminology for Texture - Modified foods and Fluids and the modifications we have made are in ***Bold Italic*** font.

## Where can I get copies?

The consensus document, poster and FAQ leaflet are all available for download from the IASLT and INDI websites:

[www.iaslt.ie](http://www.iaslt.ie) and [www.indi.ie](http://www.indi.ie)

**Irish Consistency Descriptors for Modified Fluids and Food**  
IASLT

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|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Modified Foods</b><br>Texture A - Soft<br>May be naturally soft or cooked/cut to alter its texture.  | <b>Texture B - Minced and moist</b><br>Soft, moist and easily mashed with a fork.  | <b>Texture C - Smooth pureed</b><br>Smooth, moist and lump free   | <b>Texture D - Liquidified</b><br>Smooth, pouring, uniform consistency  |
| <b>Modified Fluids</b><br>Grade 1 - Very Mildly Thick<br>Steadily, Fast flow<br>Flows thickly from a cup but slower than regular, unmodified fluids.<br>No effort required to take this thickness via a standard bore straw | <b>Grade 2 - Mildly Thick</b><br>Steadily, Fast flow<br>Flows thickly from a cup but slower than regular, unmodified fluids.<br>Effort required to take this thickness via a standard bore straw | <b>Grade 3 - Moderately Thick</b><br>Slow flow<br>Cohesive and pours slowly<br>Possible to drink from a cup although fluid flows very slowly<br>Difficult to drink using a straw, even if using a wide bore straw | <b>Grade 4 - Extremely Thick</b><br>No flow<br>Cohesive and holds its shape on spoon<br>It is not possible to pour this type of fluid from a cup into the mouth |

With thanks to: The Speech Pathology Association of Australia and the Dieticians Association of Australia.  
For further information or copies of this poster please refer to: [www.iaslt.ie](http://www.iaslt.ie) (Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists) or [www.indi.ie](http://www.indi.ie) (Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute)

# Irish Consistency Descriptors for Modified Fluids and Food

## Consensus document

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

November 2009



Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute

## Introduction

In 2008, The Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT) and the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) set up a working group to develop a national consensus document regarding the terminology used in the dietary management of patients with dysphagia. The consensus document is the first step in standardising the terminology used to describe food and fluid consistencies in the Republic of Ireland.

The terminologies suggested in the document have been adapted from the 'Australian Standardised Definitions and Terminology for Texture Modified Foods and Fluids' (Dietitians Association of Australia and The Speech Pathology Association of Australia Ltd, 2007), with some modifications for the Irish context.

This leaflet aims only to answer some frequently asked questions about the Irish Consistency Descriptors for Modified Fluids and Food. Please also refer to the full Consensus Document.

## Do all settings have to use the consensus document?

No, but we would strongly encourage all settings to consider changing to the terminology recommended here. This document offers the potential to standardise communication in relation to dysphagia management, patient transfer between settings and research. It is appreciated that many settings will already have their own system so they may not wish to change.

## If we don't change to the terminology suggested, how do we use the consensus document?

If you don't adopt the terminology suggested, this document can be used as a guide. If you are transferring a person who requires modified fluids or food between institutions, please refer to the terms used in this document. For example, in your report consider writing *'This person requires syrup consistency fluids. This consistency is the equivalent of Grade 2 - Mildly thick fluids in the Irish consistency descriptors document'*. (Please note this comparison is made for example purposes only. Syrup consistency fluids may not be the same as Grade 2 – Mildly Thick Fluids). Each setting must match the terms and descriptions provided here to their own system.

## Why have specific amounts of thickener not been provided for the modified fluids grades?

As different settings use different brands of thickener, each of which requires different amount of their product to achieve a consistency, it is not possible to give specific information in relation to the amount of thickener to use. If you decide your setting needs this information, the testing information and the poster provided will assist you in determining the amount of thickener to use for each grade of modified fluid.

## Will the fact that the terminology recommended here is different to the terms used on tins of thickener be a problem?

It is acknowledged that the terminology recommended in this document is different to those used on commercially available tins of thickener. Those terms are based on the National Descriptors for Texture Modification in Adults<sup>26</sup>, which are in use in the United Kingdom.

However, there is always some variation in the actual amount of thickener required to achieve the desired consistency. This is acknowledged on the labelling of some of the commercial thickeners.

As discussed in the consensus document, a decision was made by the working group to adopt the Australian Standardised Definitions and Terminology for Texture Modified Foods and Fluids<sup>1</sup>, in preference to the United Kingdom guidelines, as these guidelines offer a system based on description of the end point consistency required. These guidelines are also more up to date and are based on a more robust evidence base. Nutrition Companies have been consulted in relation to this document.

## What is the difference between Grade 1 – Very Mildly Thick Fluids and Grade 2 – Mildly Thick Fluids?

These fluids are different in relation to their rate of flow and the amount of coating that they leave on the inside of a glass or on the prongs of a fork. A number of different characteristics and testing information have been provided in an effort to differentiate between these two consistencies. Unfortunately, as clinicians we do not have access to viscometers or reliable scales for testing viscosity. Therefore they are not included. The thickened fluid scales should be considered a continuum which moves from *Unmodified – Regular Fluids* to *Grade 4 - Extremely Thick Fluids* (that do not flow from a cup). *Grade 1 - Very Mildly Thick Fluids* and *Grade 2 – Mildly Thick Fluids* have an important place in this continuum and offer different consistency options for use with patients.