

Dietitians of Canada supports the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative

DC is pleased to see the momentum created by the IDDSI with respect to standardisation of terminology and descriptors for texture modified foods and thickened liquids that would meet the needs of individuals with dysphagia across all ages and across care settings.

Inconsistent communications of diet orders or food and fluid texture modifications between professionals or with facility staff can lead to unintended errors in care which may have serious consequences for patients, up to and including choking deaths. In addition, different terms also set up the potential for unnecessary, costly and stressful re-evaluation of patients moving between health care institutions or between care settings. DC recognizes the potential of the IDDSI to have a positive impact on patient care through improved communications within and across care teams, and reduced stress on the patient.

Standardisation of simple testing methods for food texture and liquid thickness will also have a positive effect on staff training. Along with improved labelling and common terms on pre-prepared commercial products, food service systems will benefit from validated kitchen or bedside testing methods that will ensure that patients will receive the correct modifications meal over meal.

This is an ambitious task, taking considerable energy and commitment from many individuals, corporations and communities. DC is pleased to see this work is gaining momentum internationally as evidenced by the letter from the International Confederation of Dietetic Associations March 2017, Speech-Language and Audiology Canada Board of Directors, and many others. We are also pleased to see that the Canadian Dysphagia Industry Group has agreed to fully transition to the IDDSI framework and descriptors by January 2019.

We applaud all efforts to improve patient safety and interprofessional collaboration and communication, will work with you to continue to provide opportunities for you to share the results of the IDDSI studies and implementation across the country. DC will continue to work with you and promote uptake of the IDDSI in Canada through educational programs and presentations. DC encourages all dietitians, their colleagues and staff, to become familiar with the IDDSI system and evaluate how best to integrate these standards within their spheres of influence.

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