CRUZ CULINARY

IDDSI KITCHEN GUIDE

REAL KITCHENS. REAL TRAINING. REAL IDDSI IMPLEMENTATION.

WELCOME TO CRUZ CULINARY

Making IDDSI practical in the kitchen.

Preparing texture-modified meals requires more than following a recipe. It takes the right techniques, consistent preparation, appropriate testing, and a focus on making meals both safe and appealing.

At Cruz Culinary, we help healthcare food service teams turn IDDSI standards into practical kitchen systems. This guide brings together recipes, texture-modification techniques, equipment guidance, and testing reminders to help your team prepare meals with greater consistency and confidence.

Inside this guide, you'll find:

- Practical recipes for different IDDSI food levels and drink thicknesses.
- Guidance on food sizes, textures, and appropriate testing methods.
- Equipment recommendations and techniques for adjusting consistency.
- **Tips** for improving food quality, presentation, and kitchen execution.

A note on testing

Recipes are starting points. Ingredients, equipment, preparation methods, holding time, and serving temperature can affect the finished product. Always test food and liquids using the appropriate IDDSI methods at their intended serving temperature and follow the individual's prescribed care plan.

Want to take IDDSI implementation further?

Cruz Culinary provides hands-on training, recipe standardization, kitchen workflow guidance, and implementation support for healthcare food service teams.

Explore our resources and services to learn how we can help your team put IDDSI into practice.

Food Texture: Cut Size & Testing

Use the appropriate IDDSI tests to check the food as prepared and served.

Why testing matters

A recipe, ingredient list, or looking at the product cannot confirm that a food meets an IDDSI level. Ingredients, equipment, preparation, holding time, and serving temperature can affect the final result. Test the finished food under its intended serving conditions and follow the care plan.

Adult food size guide

IDDSI level	Adult size guide	What to check
Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized	Pieces no larger than 15 mm (1.5 cm)	Food is soft, tender and moist, with no hard, tough, chewy, fibrous or crunchy pieces. Use the relevant IDDSI tests.
Level 5 — Minced & Moist	Particles no wider than 4 mm and no longer than 15 mm	Food is moist and cohesive. Particles should be soft and easy to squash with the tongue; there should not be a separate thin liquid.
Level 4 — Puréed	No lumps	Food is smooth and cohesive, holds together on a spoon, and is not sticky. Use the Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt tests as applicable.

Important: These are adult food-size references. Pediatric requirements differ. Level 7 — Easy to Chew has its own texture criteria and does not use the same prescribed maximum piece size as Level 6.

Simple testing reminders

Level 4 — Puréed: Fork Drip Test

Place a sample on the fork and observe how it behaves around the fork tines. Level 4 purée should sit in a mound or pile on the fork; a small amount may form a short tail below the fork tines, but it should not flow continuously through them like a liquid. Check the current IDDSI criteria and use the Spoon Tilt Test as well.

Level 4 — Puréed: Spoon Tilt Test

Scoop a sample onto a spoon, then tilt or turn the spoon sideways. The sample should hold together on the spoon but slide or fall off readily when tilted, leaving very little residue. It should not be sticky or require scraping to remove.

Levels 5 and 6: Fork Pressure Test

Use the fork to press the sample and assess softness. For Level 5, particles should separate easily between the fork tines and be fork mashable with little pressure. For Level 6, the food should squash easily under fork pressure and be tender enough to break apart. The fork test does not replace checking the required piece size.

Level 3 — Moderately Thick drinks & gravies / Liquidised foods

For Moderately Thick Drinks & Gravies: Use the IDDSI Flow Test with the specified 10 mL syringe. After allowing the liquid to flow for 10 seconds, between 8 mL to 10mL should remain in the syringe. For Liquidised Foods: Assess the finished product using both the IDDSI Flow Test and Fork Drip Test.

Before serving

Test the prepared item at the temperature at which it will be served.

Check food pieces and sauces/gravy separately when relevant, then reassess the combined dish.

If the sample does not meet the intended level, adjust the recipe safely and repeat the appropriate test.

The appropriate IDDSI level for an individual must be determined by a qualified healthcare professional; this guide is not a substitute for individualized clinical advice.



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Official IDDSI references

For full procedures, diagrams, videos, and level definitions, consult the current official materials:

IDDSI Framework Documents (current Framework and Detailed Level Definitions v2.2; Testing Methods v2.0): https://www.iddsi.org/resources/framework-documents

IDDSI Patient Handouts (adult level-specific guides): https://www.iddsi.org/resources/patient-handouts

IDDSI Framework standard and use guidance: https://www.iddsi.org/standards/framework

Equipment Used in These Recipes

The equipment below is used in the recipe methods to help blend, mince, or cut food to the intended texture. Equipment alone does not establish IDDSI compliance: always check the finished food using the appropriate IDDSI tests.

Vitamix Explorian High-Speed Blender

Used in the recipe methods for Level 4 — Puréed (PU4)

Blend cooked ingredients with the recipe's specified liquid until smooth and cohesive. Stop as needed to scrape down the sides and help ingredients combine. Check the finished purée with the applicable IDDSI tests, including the Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt tests.

Important: Blending time and the amount of liquid needed can vary by ingredients and blender model. A smooth appearance or a blender vortex does not by itself confirm Level 4.



Robot Coupe Food Processor

Used in the recipe methods for Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Pulse the cooked food in short bursts, checking the particle size frequently. The recipe draft describes pulsing approximately 3–5 times as a starting point; the number of pulses will vary by batch size and machine. Check the final particle size, moisture, and texture using the appropriate IDDSI methods.



Vollrath InstaCut 5.0 Tabletop Manual Dicer — Model 55002

Used in the recipe methods for Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6) - Food Chopper

This model has a nominal ½-inch (12.7 mm) dicing blade. After cutting, check the actual pieces and the food's softness using the appropriate **IDDSI Level** 6 tests. Cut dimensions alone do not establish that food meets Level 6.



Use the equipment safely

Follow the equipment manufacturer's operating, cleaning, and safety instructions.

Choose a blade or attachment suitable for the ingredient and intended cut.

Inspect the food after processing; do not assume every piece will be identical.

Test the finished food at its intended serving temperature and consistency.

Thickening Ingredients & Options

Different ingredients can help adjust the body and consistency of a recipe. The best choice depends on the food, the target IDDSI level, preparation method, nutritional needs, and the finished result.

Using Original Food as a Thickener

The same ingredients used to prepare a dish can also be used to thicken it. Blending additional amounts of the original food. can help increase the body and thickness of a recipe while maintaining its original flavor.

Potato starch / mashed potato flakes

Can add body to suitable soups, sauces, and blended recipes. Potato flakes also contribute solids and flavor. Results vary by product and recipe.

Cornstarch

Commonly used to thicken gravies, sauces, and soups when properly dispersed and cooked. Follow the recipe method and allow the mixture to reach its intended finished condition.

Roux

A cooked mixture of fat and flour used as a base to add body to sauces, gravies, and soups. Its final texture depends on the ratio, cooking method, and amount of liquid.

Powdered milk

Adds milk solids and can contribute body in suitable recipes. It is not a universal thickener and introduces dairy.

Commercial powdered thickener

Designed to adjust liquid consistency. Follow the specific manufacturer’s instructions, including mixing, standing time, and any guidance for the liquid being used.

Panko breadcrumbs

Can add solids to some blended recipes. They must be fully incorporated and the final texture checked; breadcrumbs may not be appropriate for every recipe or target level.

Important IDDSI reminder

No ingredient or fixed amount of thickener automatically makes food or drink IDDSI-compliant. Test the finished item using the appropriate current IDDSI method at the intended serving temperature. Follow product instructions and the individual’s care plan. This reference is educational and does not replace clinical guidance.

White Roux

Yield: 1 serving (4 oz)

Ingredients

2 oz flour

2 oz butter or margarine

Use equal parts flour and butter or margarine.

Instructions

In a saucepan over medium heat, combine the flour and melted butter or margarine.

Stir continuously. As bubbles form, the roux will begin to change from pale to white.

Continue stirring until the roux reaches a white color.

Once the roux reaches the desired color, turn off the heat.

Tips

Roux progresses through four color stages: pale, white, golden, and brown.

When adding roux to gravy, soup, or another liquid, add it gradually while stirring until the desired MO3 (Moderately Thick) consistency is reached.

Thickened Chicken Gravy (Level 3 — Moderately Thick, MO3)

Yield: 4 servings (2 oz each)

IDDSI Level

Level 3 — Moderately Thick (MO3)

Ingredients

4 oz white roux

1 cup chicken broth

½ cup vegetable broth

½ tsp poultry seasoning

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp black pepper

Instructions

Combine the chicken broth and vegetable broth in a saucepan and bring to a boil.

Add the poultry seasoning, salt, and black pepper. Stir to combine.

While the broth is boiling, add the white roux and stir continuously.

Stir until the roux is fully incorporated and no lumps remain.

Reduce the heat and simmer until the gravy reaches the intended MO3 consistency.

Strain the gravy to remove any remaining roux particles.

IDDSI Flow Test

Tips

To help prevent lumps, make sure both the roux and broth are hot when combining them.

Chicken (EC7, SB6, MM5)

IDDSI Level

Level 7 — Easy to Chew (EC7)

Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6)

Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Ingredients

3 oz cooked boneless chicken

2 oz (MO3) thickened chicken gravy

Level 7 — Easy to Chew (EC7)

Cutting is not required if the chicken can be separated into pieces using a fork with minimal pressure and no knife.

Serve 3 oz chicken with 2 oz thickened chicken gravy spooned over the top.

Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6)

Use the food chopper to cut the chicken into pieces no larger than 15 mm.

Combine 3 oz diced chicken with 2 oz thickened chicken gravy.

Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Use the Robot Coupe to process the chicken to the required Level 5 particle size, no larger than 4mm.

Combine 3 oz processed chicken with 2 oz thickened chicken gravy.

Tips

Use the appropriate IDDSI tests to check the chicken texture and gravy thickness separately before combining them.

Rosemary Garlic Chicken (PU4)

Yield: 4 servings (4 oz scoop)

IDDSI Level:

Level 4 — Puréed (PU4)

Prep and Cook Time:

45 minutes

Ingredients

7 oz raw boneless chicken
4 oz Italian dressing
2 tsp garlic powder (or 1 small garlic clove)
½ cup chicken broth
2 Tbsp fresh rosemary leaves, stems removed

Preparation:

Place the Italian dressing, garlic, and rosemary in a high-speed blender. Blend until emulsified.
Pour the mixture over the chicken in an oven-safe pan.
Bake at 300°F for 20–25 minutes, or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F.

Method:

Remove the chicken from the pan and let it rest for 5 minutes.
After resting, cut the chicken into cubes and transfer them to a high-speed blender.
Heat the ½ cup of chicken broth, then add it to the blender.
Begin blending at low speed.
Stop as needed to scrape down the sides of the blender, then continue blending until the chicken and broth are fully incorporated. This may take several minutes.
If additional liquid is needed, add the remaining pan drippings gradually and continue blending.
A vortex may indicate that the mixture is moving through the blender, but it does not confirm IDDSI compliance. Test the finished purée using the appropriate methods.
Check the finished purée using the applicable Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt tests.

Tips:

If the purée is too thin, add your chosen thickening product according to its instructions, then retest.
If the purée is too thick, add 1 Tbsp butter and blend again, then retest.
Note: The recipe uses 7 oz chicken to provide enough volume for the blender to process the mixture effectively.

Cornstarch Slurry

Yield: approximately 1 Tbsp slurry

Ingredients

1 Tbsp cornstarch

1 Tbsp water

Use equal parts cornstarch and water.

Instructions

In a small cup, combine the cornstarch and water. Mix until a smooth slurry forms.

The slurry should have a syrup-like consistency.

Thickened Vegetable Broth (Level 3 — Moderately Thick, MO3)

IDDSI Level

Level 3 — Moderately Thick (MO3)

Ingredients

1 Tbsp cornstarch slurry

1 cup vegetable broth

Instructions

Heat the vegetable broth over medium heat without boiling. Add the slurry and stir continuously until incorporated.

Test the finished broth using the IDDSI Flow Test.

Turn off the heat.

Tips

If the broth is too thin, add more cornstarch slurry gradually, stirring and retesting.

If the broth is too thick, add more heated vegetable broth gradually and retest.

Notes

The source recipe uses 1 Tbsp slurry per 1 cup vegetable broth as a starting ratio.

Carrots (EC7, SB6, MM5)

IDDSI Level

Level 7 — Easy to Chew (EC7)

Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6)

Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Prep and Cook Time

10 minutes

Ingredients

4 oz cooked carrots

2 oz thickened vegetable broth

Level 7 — Easy to Chew (EC7)

The carrot pieces should be tender enough to separate using a fork with minimal pressure.
When pressed with a fork, the carrots should yield easily; check them using the appropriate IDDSI testing method.
Serve with the thickened vegetable broth spooned over the top.

Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6)

Use the food chopper to cut 4 oz carrots into pieces no larger than 15 mm.
Add 2 oz thickened vegetable broth and mix gently.

Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Use the Robot Coupe to process 4 oz carrots to the required Level 5 particle size, no larger than 4mm.
Add 2 oz thickened vegetable broth and mix gently.

Tips

Check the carrot pieces for size and texture using the appropriate IDDSI tests before adding the thickened vegetable broth.
The carrots must be soft enough to mash with a fork.

Carrots (PU4)

Yield: 2 servings (4 oz scoop)

IDDSI Level

Level 4 — Puréed

Prep and Cook Time

10 minutes

Ingredients

1 cup carrots, cooked until very tender

1 Tbsp melted butter

2 oz heated vegetable broth or cooking water from the carrots

Method:

Place the cooked carrots in a high-speed blender.

Add 1 oz of the heated vegetable broth or cooking water, reserving the remaining 1 oz.

Add the melted butter and blend until smooth.

Check the finished purée using the applicable Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt tests.

Tips:

If the purée is too thick, add the reserved liquid gradually, blend again, and retest.

If the purée is too thin, add 1 Tbsp of an appropriate thickening product according to its instructions, mix thoroughly, and retest.

Cornstarch Slurry

Yield: approximately 1 Tbsp slurry

Ingredients

1 Tbsp cornstarch

1 Tbsp water

Use equal parts cornstarch and water.

Instructions

In a small cup, combine the cornstarch and water. Mix until a smooth slurry forms.

The slurry should have a syrup-like consistency.

Teriyaki Glaze (Level 3 — Moderately Thick, MO3)

Yield: 3 servings (2 oz each)

Ingredients

1 Tbsp cornstarch slurry

4 oz teriyaki glaze

2 oz vegetable broth

Instructions

Combine the teriyaki glaze and vegetable broth in a saucepan.

Heat over medium heat.

Add the cornstarch slurry and stir until the sauce thickens.

Once the intended thickness is reached, turn off the heat.

Use the IDDSI Flow Test to check whether the glaze meets the intended MO3 consistency.

Tips:

If the glaze is too thin, add more cornstarch slurry gradually, stir, and retest.

If the glaze is too thick, add heated vegetable broth gradually, stir, and retest.

Salmon (EC7, SB6, MM5)

Ingredients

3 oz cooked salmon, skin removed

2 oz Level 3 Moderately Thick teriyaki glaze

Level 7 — Easy to Chew (EC7)

Cutting is not required if the salmon can be separated into pieces using a fork with minimal pressure and no knife. Use 3 oz cooked salmon.

Spoon 2 oz thickened teriyaki glaze over the salmon.

Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6)

Use the food chopper to cut 3 oz cooked salmon into pieces no larger than 15 mm.

Combine the salmon with 2 oz thickened teriyaki glaze.

Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Use the Robot Coupe to process 3 oz cooked salmon to the required Level 5 particle size, no larger than 4mm.

Combine the salmon with 2 oz thickened teriyaki glaze.

Tips

Use the appropriate IDDSI tests to check the salmon texture and glaze thickness separately before combining them.

Teriyaki Glazed Salmon (PU4)

Yield: 3 servings (4 oz scoop)

IDDSI Level:

Level 4 — Puréed (PU4)

Cooking Time:

20 minutes

Ingredients

8 oz salmon, skin removed

4 oz teriyaki sauce

2 oz heated vegetable broth

Preparation:

Marinate the salmon in the teriyaki sauce.

Bake at 300°F for 7–10 minutes, or until the salmon reaches the recipe's specified internal temperature of 145°F. Confirm the intended food-safety standard before publication.

Alternatively, cook on the stovetop over medium-low heat. Add the vegetable broth, cover, and cook until done.

Method:

Remove the salmon from the pan and transfer it to a high-speed blender.

Add half of the liquid from the pan and blend until smooth, adding more liquid as needed.

Continue the purée process until a vortex is formed.

Check the finished purée using the applicable Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt tests.

Tips:

If the purée is too thick, add pan drippings gradually, blend again, and retest. A vortex alone does not confirm IDDSI compliance.

If the purée is too thin, add an appropriate thickening product according to its instructions, mix thoroughly, and retest.

Eggs (SB6, MM5)

IDDSI Level

Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6)

Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Prep and Cook Time

5–10 minutes

Ingredients

3 oz scrambled eggs

1 oz ground white bread, if needed

Preparation:

Scramble eggs with butter over low heat. Avoid creating browned or crusted edges.

Level 6 — Soft & Bite-Sized (SB6)

Place 3 oz cooked scrambled eggs in the food chopper and process to pieces no larger than 15 mm.

Check the eggs using the appropriate IDDSI tests.

Transfer the eggs to a bowl. If free butter separates or runs onto the plate, sprinkle with ground white bread as needed, mix, and retest.

Level 5 — Minced & Moist (MM5)

Place the eggs in the Robot Coupe and pulse 3–5 times, checking the result frequently. The number of pulses may vary.

Test the finished eggs to the required Level 5 particle size, no larger than 4mm.

Transfer the eggs to a bowl. If free butter separates or runs onto the plate, add ground white bread as needed, mix, and retest.

Eggs (PU4)

Yield: 2 servings (4 oz scoop)

IDDSI Level

Level 4 — Puréed (PU4)

Prep and Cook Time

10 minutes

Ingredients

6 whole eggs
½ cup whole milk
1 slice white bread
¼ cup melted butter

Preparation:

Use the melted butter to scramble the eggs.
Heat the whole milk to 160°F.
Cut the bread into cubes.

Method:

Transfer the scrambled eggs to a high-speed blender.
Add the heated milk.
Blend the scrambled eggs and heated milk on low speed for 1 minute.
Add the bread cubes one at a time, gradually increasing the blender speed.
Stop as needed to scrape down the sides of the blender and reposition the mixture.
Continue blending until smooth, then check the finished purée using the applicable IDDSI tests.
Use the Fork Drip and Spoon Tilt tests to assess the finished purée.

Tips:

If the purée is too thick, add up to ¼ cup additional milk gradually, blend again, and retest.
If the purée is too thin, add additional bread gradually, blend again, and retest.

Chicken Noodle Soup (Level 3 — Moderately Thick, MO3)

Yield: 2 servings (6 oz each)

IDDSI Level

Level 3 — Moderately Thick (M03)

Prep and Cook Time

45 minutes

Ingredients

1 tbsp canola oil
4 oz yellow onion, diced
4 oz celery, diced
4 oz carrots, diced
1 cup heated chicken broth
½ cup heated vegetable broth
3 oz diced chicken
¼ tsp white pepper
¼ tsp salt
2 oz cooked pasta
1 tsp fresh parsley

Method:

Mix the canola oil, onion, celery, and carrots in a medium pot over medium heat.
Once the ingredients begin to sweat, add the salt, white pepper, and fresh parsley.
Add the chicken broth, vegetable broth, and cooked diced chicken.
Cook the soup over medium-high heat for 30 minutes.
Once cooked, transfer half of the soup to a high-speed blender and begin blending.
While blending, add the cooked pasta to the blender.
Continue blending until the soup reaches the MO3 consistency.
Use the IDDSI Syringe Flow Test to check the consistency.

Tips:

If the soup is too thick, add more vegetable broth to the blender and blend again.
If the soup is too thin, add more cooked pasta or chicken, blend again, and retest.

Real Kitchens. Real Training. Real IDDSI Implementation.

Cruz Culinary works directly with healthcare kitchens to help teams prepare safe, consistent, and appealing texture-modified meals and build practical systems for IDDSI implementation.

Hands-on staff training

Build staff confidence in preparation, texture modification, testing, and presentation.

Recipe development and standardization

Improve consistency, flavor, appearance, and repeatability across batches and shifts.

IDDSI testing systems

Develop practical testing procedures and accountability practices for daily food service.

Kitchen workflow and equipment guidance

Improve preparation methods and equipment use within the realities of your kitchen.

Plate presentation

Help make texture-modified meals more appealing while maintaining the required texture.

Implementation and sustainability support

Support facilities as they establish routines, train staff, and maintain consistent practices.

How can we help your facility?

Contact Cruz Culinary to discuss your kitchen, staff training needs, recipe goals, and IDDSI implementation priorities.

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE.

Cruz Culinary was built on decades of hands-on culinary and healthcare food service experience. We understand the challenges healthcare kitchens face because we've worked directly in them.

Whether you’re looking to strengthen your team’s IDDSI knowledge, improve food quality, standardize recipes, or implement sustainable kitchen practices, Cruz Culinary is here to help.

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Interested in staff training, recipe development, or IDDSI implementation support? Get in touch.