

Clinical Task Instruction

Delegated Task

D-SO05: Thickened fluids and texture modified diet preparation and education

Scope and objectives of clinical task

This Clinical Task Instruction (CTI) will enable the Allied Health Assistant to:

- instruct the client (or carer if relevant) to prepare thickened fluids and/or a texture modified diet.

VERSION CONTROL

Version: 1.1

Reviewed: (Profession) Directors of Speech Pathology

Date: 19/06/2026

Approved: (Operational) Chief Allied Health Officer, Queensland Health

Date: 11/08/2026

Document custodian: Chief Allied Health Officer, Queensland Health

Review date: 11/08/2029

Acknowledgements: Speech Pathology Allied Health Assistant working group

The CTI reflects best practice and agreed process for conduct of the task at the time of approval and should not be altered. Feedback, including proposed amendments to this published document, should be directed to the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer (OCAHO) at: allied_health_advisory@health.qld.gov.au

This CTI should be used under a delegation framework implemented at the work unit level. The framework is available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/ahassist>

Prior to use please check <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/clintaskinstructions> for the latest version of this CTI.

© State of Queensland (Queensland Health) 2023



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives 4.0 Australia licence. In essence, you are free to copy and communicate the work in its current form for non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute Queensland Health and authoring unit listed above and abide by the licence terms. You may not alter or adapt the work in any way. To view a copy of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.en>.

For further information contact the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer, Queensland Health, PO Box 2368, Fortitude Valley BC QLD 4006, email allied_health_advisory@health.qld.gov.au, phone (07) 3328 9298. For permissions beyond the scope of this licence contact: Intellectual Property Officer, Queensland Health, GPO Box 48, Brisbane Qld 4001, email ip_officer@health.qld.gov.au, phone (07) 3708 5069.

Disclaimer

Queensland Health has made every effort to ensure that the information in this resource, at the time of distribution, is correct. The information in this resource will be kept under review and future publications will incorporate any necessary amendments.

The information in this resource does not constitute clinical advice and should not be relied upon as such in a clinical situation. The information is provided solely on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessment of the matters presented herein and readers are advised to verify all relevant representations, statements and information. Specialist advice in relation to the application of the information presented in this publication must be sought as necessary to ensure the application is clinically appropriate.

In no event, shall Queensland Health be liable (including negligence) for any claim, action, proceeding, demand, liability, costs, damages, expenses or loss (including without limitation, direct, indirect, punitive, special or consequential) whatsoever brought against it or made upon it or incurred by Queensland Health arising out of or in connection with a person's use of information in this publication.

Requisite training, knowledge, skills and experience

Training

- Completion of CTI D-WTS01 When to stop.
- Mandatory training requirements relevant to Queensland Health clinical roles are assumed knowledge for this CTI.
- Completion of the following Queensland Health allied health assistant training modules (or corresponding units of competency in HLT43021 Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance) or equivalent work-based learning:

- Speech Pathology Learner Guide: provide support in dysphagia management.

Access the module/s at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/ahassist-modules>

Clinical knowledge

- The following content knowledge is required by an allied health assistant delivering this task:
 - understand the purpose and rationale for a thickened fluids and texture modified diet as part of the management plan
 - awareness of the client considerations when preparing the thickened fluids and texture modified diet e.g. cost, required equipment, processes to order, places to purchase thickener
 - the common products and method/s a client can use to prepare thickened fluids and texture modified diets for personal use that are available in the local service
 - the appearance and differences between various texture modified diets and thickened fluids.
- The knowledge requirements will be met by the following activities:
 - completing the training program/s (listed above)
 - reviewing the Learning resource
 - receiving instruction from an allied health professional in the training phase.

Skills or experience

- The following skills or experience are not identified in the task procedure but support the safe and effective performance of the task and are required by an allied health assistant delivering this task:
 - Nil

Safety and quality

Client

- The allied health assistant will apply CTI D-WTS01 When to stop at all times.
- In addition, the following potential risks and precautions have been identified for this clinical task and should be monitored carefully by the allied health assistant during the task:
 - the prescription of thickened fluids and modified diets are to support swallowing/ feeding problems. If tasting products occurs during the task the client may show signs of:
 - o penetration and/or aspiration. Signs may include coughing, throat clearing or wet voice before, during or after swallowing. If the client demonstrates signs of aspiration, cease the task, provide reassurance, encourage the client to cough and implement local workplace

procedures e.g. inform the health care team and the delegating health professional that potential aspiration has been observed.

- choking. During eating, food can fully or partially block (obstruct) the airway, causing choking. Signs include clutching the throat, coughing, inability to breathe or speak, cyanosis or loss of consciousness. Airway obstructions are considered a medical emergency and local procedures should be commenced immediately e.g. code blue response activated.
- prior to product usage and/or tasting, check the allergen information for client suitability and source alternate products and/or fluids if required.

Equipment, aids and appliances

- As this task includes food items, expiry dates should be checked and storage requirements adhered to, to prevent spoilage prior to use. This may include observing for coagulation or thickening of milk. All spoiled food items should be disposed of and replacement products sourced. Any fluid and/or food remaining at the end of the task should be disposed of in the appropriate receptacle e.g. in the servery area or for clients who are infectious in the bedside receptacle.
- Check the equipment is clean prior to preparing the thickened fluids or modified diets e.g. washed with warm soapy water and thoroughly dried.
- If using electrical equipment (blender), all equipment should be examined to be in good working order e.g. no observable fraying of cords, switches working properly and if in a Queensland Health facility, test and tag in situ and current.
- If the client has hearing aids, glasses or dentures, these should be fitted prior to commencing the task. If the client has difficulty fitting devices, provide assistance. If uncertain about fitting requirements, seek guidance from a healthcare professional.

Environment

- Ensure the environment is clean, uncluttered and supports effective communication and safe practice. This may include removing items and minimising distractions by turning off the TV or radio.

Performance of clinical task

1. Delegation instructions

- Receive the delegated task from the health professional.
- The delegating allied health professional should clearly identify parameters for delivering the clinical task to the specific client, including any variance from the usual task procedure and expected outcomes. This may include:
 - the client's current diet and fluid i.e. IDDSI level, regular or mildly thick fluids or a soft and bite sized diet
 - information to be provided, including resource/handout for use
 - person to receive the education i.e. the client and/or a carer/family member
 - location for the task e.g. patient bedside, rehabilitation gym kitchen
 - specific client considerations and management strategies e.g. allergies, visual neglect, use of an interpreter, hearing aid, dentures or communication device
 - if providing a demonstration or practice opportunity, food and fluid items to be used e.g. hot/cold/carbonated drinks, tea, coffee, lemonade, beer

- and if the session is to include taste testing by the client.

2. Preparation

- Collect or print the required education/information resource/s.
- Collect the thickener powder/ liquid samples, cup, measuring jug, spoon and fork and planned fluids and/or foods to be used for demonstration.

3. Introduce task and seek consent

- The allied health assistant introduces themselves to the client.
- The allied health assistant checks three forms of client identification: full name, date of birth, plus one of the following: hospital unit record (UR) number, Medicare number, or address.
- The allied health assistant describes the task to the client. For example:
 - I have been asked to show you how to prepare your own thickened fluids and modified foods.
- The allied health assistant seeks informed consent according to the Queensland Health Guide to Informed Decision-making in Health Care, Version 2.6 (2025).

4. Positioning

- The client's position during the task should be:
 - sitting upright in bed or in a supportive chair.
- The allied health assistant's position during the task should be:
 - facing the client and at eye level, ideally in a position where the allied health assistant is easily able to converse with the client, point to stimulus items and provide instructions.

5. Task procedure

- Explain and demonstrate (where applicable) the task to the client.
- Check the client has understood the task and provide an opportunity to ask questions.
- The task comprises the following steps:
 1. Provide the information/education resource to the client.
 2. Present information/education including any variants to the standard information requested by the delegating health practitioner e.g. a summary of the resource.
 3. Discuss any particular strategies on the information brochure that have been highlighted by the delegating health professional e.g. cost, contact details of suppliers.
 4. If providing a demonstration of thickened fluids:
 - a. Wash hands and don gloves prior to handling food items.
 - b. Locate the recommended quantity of thickener (powder or liquid) and preparation requirements as per the product instructions.
 - c. Measure the fluid for thickening and determine the required quantity of thickener to be added. Reinforce with the client the need to measure accurately each and every time and to avoid eyeballing strategies or use of generic kitchen cups and spoons.
 - d. Measure the required quantity of thickener for use and add to the fluid.
 - e. Follow the preparation instructions by mixing the fluid until thickener is well dissolved/dispersed and no lumps are present.
 - f. Use the IDDSI fork drip test and spoon tilt test to confirm the fluid thickness see Learning resource.

- g. Provide the client an opportunity to observe the fluid and if part of the delegation instruction, taste the thickened fluid. See Safety & quality.
- 5. If the delegation instruction included client practice, instruct the client to perform step 4, providing feedback to the client to support performance.
- 6. If providing a demonstration of modified diet:
 - a. Wash hands and don gloves prior to handling food items.
 - b. Prepare the food sample to align to the required IDDSI level description/characteristics by cooking, chopping or pureeing.
 - c. Use the IDDSI testing method to confirm the food meets the prescribed level.
 - d. Provide the client an opportunity to observe and if part of the delegation instruction, taste the food. See Safety & quality.
- 7. If the delegation instruction included client practice, instruct the client to perform step 6, providing feedback to the client to support performance.
- 8. On completion of the session dispose of thickened fluid/food items, wipe over the counter/bedside table, clean and store the demonstration products and equipment.
- During the task:
 - provide feedback and correct errors in the performance of the task including:
 - check that the client understands the information provided by asking if they have any questions and by gauging whether the client appears confused or concerned about the information.
 - note any questions or concerns that the client has that are not covered by the printed resource or by the allied health assistant's training and indicate to the client that these questions will be provided to the relevant health professional for follow-up.
 - each thickener will have differing instructions for the time required to mix and/or rest the mixture prior to consumption. Refer to the instructions on the packaging.
 - some thickening powders/liquids are not stable over a period of time e.g. the longer the thickened fluid sits, the thicker it becomes. If there is a delay between preparation and taste testing occurring, refer to instructions on the packaging for the recommended consumption time period. If within the time period re-test for thickness prior to consumption. If the time period is exceeded discard.
 - as food preparation and storage can alter a foods' characteristics, IDDSI testing should always occur prior to consumption.
 - monitor for adverse reactions and implement appropriate mitigation strategies as outlined in the Safety and quality section above including CTI D-WTS01 When to stop.
- At the conclusion of the task:
 - encourage feedback from the client on the task
 - provide summary feedback to the client, emphasising positive aspects of performance and areas to work on
 - ensure the client is comfortable and safe.

6. Document

- Document the outcomes of the task in the clinical record, consistent with relevant documentation standards and local procedures. Include observation of client performance, expected outcomes that were and were not achieved, and difficulties encountered or symptoms reported by the client during the task.

- For this task, the following specific information should be presented:
 - the topic or title of the written education/information resource/s provided
 - if demonstration, or client/carer practice occurred, the type of fluids and/or food used and the IDDSI level practised
 - if taste testing occurred a list of items consumed
 - problems encountered and any actions taken.

7. Report to the delegating health professional

- Provide comprehensive feedback to the health professional who delegated the task.

References and supporting documents

- International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI). Available at: <https://iddsi.org/>
- Queensland Health (2015). Clinical Task Instruction D-WTS01 When to stop. Available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/clintaskinstructions>.
- Queensland Health (2025). Guide to Informed Decision-making in Health Care. Version 2.6. Available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/consent/clinician-resources/guide-to-informed-decision-making-in-healthcare>.

Assessment: performance criteria checklist

D-SO05: Thickened fluids and texture modified diet preparation and education

Name:

Position:

Work Unit:

Performance criteria	Knowledge acquired	Supervised task practice	Competency assessment
	<i>Date and initials of supervising AHP</i>	<i>Date and initials of supervising AHP</i>	<i>Date and initials of supervising AHP</i>
Demonstrates knowledge of fundamental concepts required to undertake the task.			
Obtains all required information from the delegating health professional, and seeks clarification if required, prior to accepting and proceeding with the delegated task.			
Completes preparation for the task including collecting required education/information resource/s e.g. handout, thickener powder/ liquid samples, cup, measuring jug, spoon and fork and planned fluids and/or foods to be used for demonstration.			
Introduces self to the client and checks client identification.			
Describes the purpose of the delegated task and seeks informed consent.			
Positions self and client appropriately to complete the task and ensure safety.			
Delivers the task effectively and safely as per delegated instructions and CTI procedure. a) Clearly explains the task, checking the client's understanding. b) Provides the information resource to the client and refers to the resource to guide education. c) If providing a demonstration of thickened fluids, washes hands, correctly identifies preparation instructions and accurately measures and mixes the required quantities of thickener and fluid. d) Accurately determines the IDDSI level. e) Appropriately instructs and supports the client with practice. f) If providing a demonstration of modified diet, washes hands, prepares the food sample to align to required IDDSI level. g) Repeats steps d & e h) On completion correctly disposes of food items, cleans and stores products and equipment. i) During the task, maintains a safe clinical environment and manages risks appropriately. j) Provides feedback to the client on performance during and at completion of the task.			
Documents the outcomes of the task in the clinical record, consistent with relevant documentation standards and local procedures.			

Provides accurate and comprehensive feedback to the delegating health professional.			
Comments on the local service model e.g. workplace instructions and protocols included during the training phase:			
The allied health assistant has been trained and assessed as competent to deliver the following resources: ☐ Food & Drinks Classification and Testing: Adult and Paediatric ☐ _____ ☐ _____ ☐ _____ ☐ _____ ☐ _____ ☐ _____ Thickened fluid demonstration for: ☐ Slightly thick ☐ Mildly thick ☐ Moderately thick ☐ Extremely thick Modified meal demonstration for: ☐ Easy to chew ☐ Soft and bitesize ☐ Minced and moist ☐ Puree ☐ Liquidised			
Comments:			
Record of assessment competence:			
Assessor name:		Assessor position:	Competence achieved: / /
Scheduled review:			
Review date:	/ /		

Thickened fluids and texture modified diet preparation and education: Learning resource

Textured modified food and fluids have their natural food texture/consistency changed to allow safer and/or easier swallowing. There are internationally agreed levels of texture modified food and fluids (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative). The texture level needs to match the client's requirements to be safe for swallowing. For example, fluids that are too thin or too thick may be unsafe.

Different types of thickening agents can be purchased by the client:

- pre-packaged thickened fluids (as used in the hospital) or
- thickening powder/liquid, that is added to drinks and liquidised foods to achieve the appropriate thickness.

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of pre-packaged versus hand thickening with powder/liquids

Thickened fluid	Advantage	Disadvantage
Pre-packaged	• Quality assured accurate thickness • No preparation time required • Easily transportable/ accessible e.g. travelling	• Expensive to purchase • Available products/ flavours may not meet client preference • Can be difficult to open
Hand-thickening with powder/ liquids	• Cost-effective • Can thicken any drink/ fluid	• Inaccuracies may occur due to human error

Required reading

- Queensland Children's Hospital (2023). Dysphagia (swallowing difficulties) in children. Resource No: FS326. Available at: <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/health-a-to-z/swallowing-difficulty-dysphagia>
- The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation institute (IDDSI). Available at: <https://iddsi.org/>
 - IDDSI Framework(2026). Available at: with https://www.iddsi.org/images/Publications-Resources/FrameworkPyramid/iddsi_framework_headline_july_28_2020_rgb.pdf
- The local service may also include a range of IDDSI Framework Posters for use, these are available at: <https://iddsi.org/Resources/Posters>. For example
 - Food & Drinks Classification and Testing: Adult https://www.iddsi.org/images/Publications-Resources/Poster/OtherPosters/iddsi_framework_poster_adult_food_drink_final_with_bleed_jan2020.pdf
 - Food & Drinks Classification and Testing: Paediatric (2020) https://www.iddsi.org/images/Publications-Resources/Poster/OtherPosters/iddsi_framework_poster_a3_a_p_food_only_final_with_bleed_jan2020.pdf

- Flow Test (2020). Available at: https://www.iddsi.org/images/Publications-Resources/Poster/OtherPosters/iddsi_poster_flow_test_jan2020.pdf
- IDDSI Funnel – Instructions for use (2023). <https://www.iddsi.org/images/Publications-Resources/Funnels/iddsi-funnel-instructions-english-jan-2023.pdf>

Example client resources

The following list is provided for learning purposes as examples. Client resources chosen for required reading will be determined by the local service and be relevant to the information that the allied health assistant will be trained and assessed to deliver to a client and listed in the allied health assistant's individual Performance Criteria Checklist.

Meal

NEMO handouts

- Puree Diet (IDDSI level 4) Available at: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/1065828/txt-mod-puree.pdf
- Minced and Moist Diet (IDDSI level 5) Available at: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/1065854/txt-mod-minced.pdf
- Soft & bite sized (IDDSI level 6) Available at: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/1065858/txt-mod-soft.pdf

IDDSI website

- Patient handouts. Available at: <https://iddsi.org/Resources/Patient-Handouts>

Recipes

- Nestle Health Science. Dysphagia diet recipes. Available at: <https://www.nestlehealthscience.co.uk/health-management/dysphagia/recipe-ideas>
- Simone Howells and Griffith University Master of Speech Pathology Students (2014-2017). Beyond the Blender. Dysphagia made easy. Available at <https://lansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Beyond-the-Blender-dysphagia-cookbook.pdf>

Thickened fluid

NEMO handouts

- (IDDSI levels 0-4). Available at: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/146567/txt_mod_tf.pdf

Flavour Creations

- Instant Thick – mixing instructions. Available at: [M-IT006-Single-Serve-Mixing-Guide.pdf](https://www.flavourcreations.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/easy-thick-rapid-mixing-guide-single-serve.pdf) (flavourcreations.com.au)
- Easy Thick Rapid - mixing instructions. Available at: <https://www.flavourcreations.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/easy-thick-rapid-mixing-guide-single-serve.pdf>

Resource Thicken Up Clear

- Preparation guides and recipes which includes a range of drinks, supplements and Movicol. Available at: <https://www.ncare.net.au/resource-centre/preparation-guides-and-recipes>

Precise Thickn

- Thickn – mixing instructions for supplements and laxatives. Available at:
<https://precisethickn.com.au/mixing-instructions-for-supplements-and-laxatives/>

IDDSI website

- Consumer handouts available in languages other than English. Available at:
<https://iddsi.org/Resources/Patient-Handouts>