



*This is an excerpt from IDDSI's e-bite published in May 2019, you can read the full e-bite [here](#).*

### A bit of background on REGULAR 7 Easy to Chew

Our newest subcategory **Regular 7 Easy to Chew** was developed following feedback globally from clinicians and others seeking a diet of softer foods that did not have to be of any particular particle size restriction. Requests came particularly from those working in aged care facilities for those older individuals who could manage to eat softer foods but struggled with harder to chew foods due to factors such as age, de-conditioning, minor change in dental status, fatigue or personal preference.

**Regular 7 Easy to Chew** allows for softer choices within a regular diet without particle size restriction with the premise being that the requirement for softer food choices is related to reasons other than increased concern about choking. People can be unsafe to eat without supervision due to chewing and swallowing problems and/or unsafe mealtime behaviours. Examples of unsafe mealtime behaviors include: not chewing very well, putting too much food into the mouth, eating too fast or swallowing large mouthfuls of food, inability to self-monitor chewing ability.

It is anticipated people on **Regular 7 Easy to Chew** would be able to manage this diet level without the specific need for supervision for increased choking risk **however assessment and recommendation for supervision remains with the healthcare professional in consultation with that individual.**

In creating this subcategory the IDDSI Board discussed a number of options and based the decision to place it within Level 7, on the following rationale:

- Specific particle size restriction was designed to reduce the risk of choking for those with physical difficulty chewing or mealtime behaviours which put them at risk. In Level 6 we specify no more than 1.5 cm size for adults and no more than .8 cm for children. The size was selected based on evidence related to trachea size and choking.
- The request from the global community was for foods that while soft, did not have particle size restriction.
- Unrestricted particle size is ONLY in Level 7. Our intention was that at Level 7 the person themselves would have the judgement to not eat a food that is too hard or tough and the risk for choking is no higher than "normal" risk.
- IDDSI Level 6 and below (which all have particle restriction) were all designed for individuals with physical difficulties and/or mealtime behaviors that put them at higher risk for choking.
- We therefore did not correlate our new subcategory with Level 6 as we wanted to avoid potential misinterpretation of someone with increased choking risk being offered unrestricted particle sizes: we felt the risk of an error would be more severe for someone requiring Level 6 than if the error was made with Level 7 where the individual has the ability to self-monitor.

**The intent of the IDDSI framework is to provide a standardized way of describing, testing and determining levels of food texture and drink consistency to use for those with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. The determination of whether a person has dysphagia or increased risk of choking is a clinical judgment.**