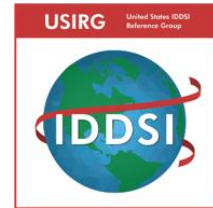


# USIRG's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



## TOPIC: Gelatin/Jell-O from the United States

### BACKGROUND

The [IDDSI framework](#) describes “*edible gelatin*” as a “sticky or gummy texture.” (See “Food Textures that Pose a Choking Risk” on page 23-24 of [The IDDSI Framework - English](#) 2019 version). However, the typical prepared gelatin products used in the United States (such as Jell-O brand gelatin) are different.

This gelatin/Jell-O in the USA is not the same as the Dysphagia Training Jelly of Japan. The gelatin/Jell-O of the USA is also very different from the Japanese konjac jelly, which is extremely gummy, cannot be pulled apart, and presents a very high choking risk.

This FAQ will address the prepared gelatin/Jell-O that is offered in many healthcare institutions and used in home settings around the United States. It may be homemade or bought ready-to-serve.

### QUESTION 1: What IDDSI Level is prepared gelatin/Jell-O?

ANSWER:

Per testing and due to the challenging and **variable nature** of gelatin/Jell-O preparations across the USA, it is best practice to have gelatin/Jell-O only on the Regular, IDDSI Level 7 and Thin Liquid, Level 0 menus, unless:

- Your facility's IDDSI testing indicates otherwise. This is based on your products, methods of preparation, and recipes. For example, gelatin/Jell-O may test appropriately for those on an Easy to Chew, Level 7.
- Provided based on a case-by-case assessment by a speech pathologist (SLP).
- Provided based on a Person-Centered Care approach (see PCC statement below).

The [IDDSI Testing Methods](#) yielded variable and contradictory results across many gelatin products. The following characteristics make gelatin/Jell-O a unique and potentially challenging food:

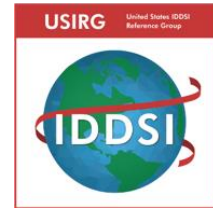
- Using the Spoon Tilt Test, it slides off spoon in one firm chunk.
- Using the Fork or Finger Pressure Test the results were variable, as samples:
  - Squashed with a fork, but broke apart into small particles, which will not form a cohesive bolus to meeting IDDSI testing standards, or
  - Remained too firm to squash between fingers.
- Upon opening a pre-packaged product, a separate layer of thin liquid was present.
- Using IDDSI's Transitional Food testing ([found on page 10 of the English version of IDDSI Testing Methods](#)), gelatin/Jell-O does not melt to a thin liquid when water is applied.

### QUESTION 2: Can we thicken the gelatin/Jell-O with a thickener product in the process of preparing it?

ANSWER:

Thickening gelatin/Jell-O can be difficult and may take trial-and-error until a palatable and safe product is attained. Reach out to your facility's suppliers for recipes to try with various thickener products. There may also be commercially pre-packaged gelatin-like products that test to be appropriate for specific

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IDDSI levels. Always test all prepared or purchased products with the appropriate IDDSI Testing Methods to confirm the IDDSI level.

Per The [IDDSI Framework](#): "*The IDDSI Framework provides a common terminology to describe food textures and drink thickness. IDDSI tests are intended to confirm the flow or textural characteristics of a particular product at the time of testing. Testing should be done on foods and drinks under the intended serving conditions (especially temperature). The clinician has the responsibility to make recommendations for foods or drinks for a particular patient based on their comprehensive clinical assessment.*" (pg 2)

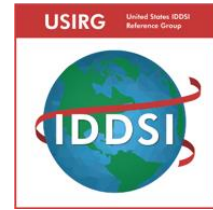
### *PERSON-CENTERED CARE (PCC) STATEMENT*

*The IDDSI Framework cannot change, but the diet order can be individualized. Person-centered diet orders specify an individual's needs within and outside the IDDSI Framework. The medical team works in collaboration with the person's wishes, preferences, goals of care, and individual abilities. Risks and benefits may be addressed in the informed consent process. Clear orders, communication, and documentation are key to person-centered care.*

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