Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Thickened Fluids (Level 4- Extremely Thick)

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Thickened Fluids (Level 4 – Extremely Thick)

Patient Information

Speech & Language Therapy Services

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Why do I need to thicken my drinks?

You have been advised to thicken your drinks by a Speech & Language Therapist. This is because your swallow is not working properly (dysphagia) and there is a risk that normal thin drinks will go the wrong way into your lungs instead of your stomach (aspiration). This could cause you to develop chest infections or pneumonia.

Thickened fluids move more slowly in your mouth and throat and are easier to control, therefore reducing the risk of drinks going the “wrong way.”

The thickness of drinks you need depends on your specific swallowing difficulty. You have been advised to thicken your drinks to the following consistency:

Consistency Level 4 Extremely thick
Description • Falls off a spoon in a single spoonful • Too thick to drink from a cup • Too thick to drink through a straw
• Needs to be sipped from a spoon

How do I thicken my drinks?

Drinks are thickened by adding thickening powder (e.g. “Resource Thicken-Up Clear”).

The amount of thickener required will depend on the consistency you have been recommended. Each tin of thickener will have a scoop inside and the number of scoops required for each thickness level on the back of the tin. For your safety and wellbeing, it is important to add the correct amount of fluid to the correct number of scoops to achieve the right consistency.

You should thicken ALL drinks and fluids, including sauces, soups, and gravy. You can use either the thickening powder or cornflour to thicken your sauces, soups, and gravy.

Using “Resource Thicken-Up Clear”

1. Powder First: use the scoop included in the tin. For best results, add the powder to a clean and dry cup or glass.

2. Add Liquid: measure the correct amount in a jug, then pour on top of the powder.

3. Stir: Start stirring immediately until the powder is completely dissolved.

4. Serve: Leave to stand for one minute before serving.

“Resource Thicken-Up Clear Dosage Chart” Level 2 Fluids				
Amount of liquid	200ml	600ml	1000ml	2000ml
Scoops required	6	18	30	60

Where do I get thickening powder from?

You will be given some thickener to take home from hospital with you. Further tins of thickener will then be available on repeat prescription from your GP. Please contact your GP if you have any problems obtaining your thickener.

What about cleaning my teeth?

It is important to brush your teeth, tongue, and gums at least twice a day, especially after meals. Bacteria from the mouth can lead to chest infections if it goes down the “wrong way”.
Put a pea-sized amount of toothpaste onto a toothbrush and brush your teeth in the normal way. There is no need to rinse; remove any toothpaste residue with the toothbrush.

What about my medication?

If you have been advised to thicken your drinks, this also applies to any fluids you use to take your tablets. Some medications are available in syrup form or may dissolve in water which should then be thickened. You may prefer to take your tablets with a teaspoon of smooth food (e.g. yogurt) to make them easier to swallow.

It is essential that you speak to your GP or Pharmacist before changing the way you take your medication, or if you are struggling with swallowing tablets.



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