

## Patient information factsheet

# Thickened fluids

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You should be thickening your drinks to a level \_\_\_\_\_ consistency.

We have given you this factsheet because a speech and language therapist (SLT) has advised that you should thicken your drinks. It includes instructions on how to thicken your drinks and a variety of hot and cold drink ideas to try.

### Why do I need thickened fluids?

When mouth or throat muscles are weak or uncoordinated, it can be difficult to swallow without coughing or spluttering. Thickened fluids are sometimes easier to swallow because they move more slowly, allowing better control of the liquid.









### Types of thickeners

The best types of thickeners are those prescribed by your doctor, for example Nutilis Clear. Alternatively, you can use cornflour to thicken anything that is going to be boiled. You can also use instant potato granules, such as Smash, or fresh, smooth mashed potato to thicken soups, gravy or savoury foods that are too runny.

### How to thicken your drinks with Nutilis Clear thickening powder

1. Make up any drink (hot or cold) with any additions (squash, milk or sugar) to a 200ml measure.
2. Add the required number of level scoops of Nutilis Clear powder to a dry glass that can easily hold 200ml. Please refer to the table on the next page.
3. Pour the drink into the glass with the powder and stir quickly with a spoon.
4. Leave to stand for 60 seconds. Stir again. Check consistency. Serve.

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Level	Consistency	Number of scoops	Description
1	Slightly thick	1 level scoop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be slightly thicker than water and should run off of a spoon easily</li> <li>Can be drunk from a cup</li> </ul> 
2	Mildly thick	2 level scoops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should leave a thin coating on the back of a spoon</li> <li>Can be drunk from a cup</li> </ul> 
3	Moderately thick	3 level scoops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should leave a thick coating on the back of a spoon</li> <li>Will dollop off of a spoon</li> </ul> 
4	Extremely thick	7 level scoops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs to be given with a spoon</li> <li>Will hold its shape when dolloped</li> </ul> 

For convenience, cold drinks can be thickened in larger amounts in a jug and stored in the fridge until needed. It is best to keep drinks covered, as they can thicken over time if left out.

Please note that once the powder has been added to your drink, you cannot add anything else, such as milk, sugar or water, to it. If you wish to add anything else, you will need to start again from step one.

The amount of thickener required may vary slightly depending on the temperature or thickness of the liquid to be thickened.

## Cold drinks

- It is possible to thicken plain water. Alternatively, try flavouring it with squash or cordial.
- Drinks with a sharper flavour tend to be more pleasant once thickened. Try lime cordial, or cranberry, grapefruit, blackcurrant or fruit and barley squashes.
- It is also possible to thicken milky drinks.
- Burger bar milkshakes are also popular. Add thickening powder as required.

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## Hot drinks

- Hot, milky drinks, such as Horlicks, hot chocolate or Ovaltine, thicken well.
- If you do not like milk, try the hot drink sachets where you just add boiling water. These also thicken well.
- Tea and coffee can be thickened.

## Savoury drinks

- Try thickening Bovril, Marmite or soups.
- Choose the 'cream of' soup varieties, such as tomato or asparagus.
- Do not have watery or lumpy soups, such as minestrone or vegetable.
- Strain or sieve soups to remove all lumps.

## Naturally thick drinks

- Some drinks are already naturally thick. Try vegetable juices, such as carrot or tomato, or fruit juices, such as apricot, mango or peach.
- Smoothies are a popular naturally thick drink. These can be homemade or found in supermarket chiller cabinets. These are either pure fruit juice or a combination of yoghurt and fruit juice. They can be thickened further with thickening powder (if needed).
- You can experiment with your own liquidised fruit combinations. Smooth fruits, such as bananas, tinned apricots, peaches, pears, or sieved, stewed or pureed fruits (without pips, skins or fibres) can be mixed with smooth yoghurt and/or fruit juice to produce a thick, smooth consistency.

## Pre-thickened drinks

- Drinks which are already pre-thickened are also available. Ask your speech and language therapist, dietitian or doctor for more details.

## Alcoholic drinks

- Alcoholic drinks can be thickened. Spirits and wine are easier to thicken than gassy drinks like beer or cider. Some liqueurs are often already slightly thick, such as Irish cream drinks.

## Fluid intake

- If you need to increase your fluid intake, you may like to add more fluid-filled foods to your diet, such as custard, milk puddings, sauces or gravy (you may need to thicken these).
- It is important that you drink enough fluids (unless your doctor has told you otherwise). We recommend that you drink six to eight glasses of fluid a day.

## Contact us

Department of dietetics/speech and language therapy  
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Telephone: **023 8120 6072**

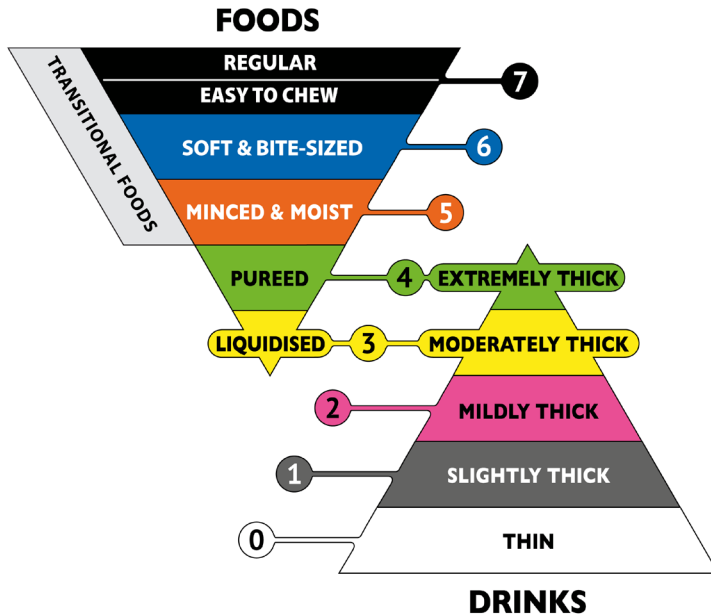
## Useful links

[www.mynutlis.co.uk](http://www.mynutlis.co.uk)

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[www.iddsi.org](http://www.iddsi.org)

International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) is a global initiative to improve the lives of people living with dysphagia (swallowing difficulties). They have produced a framework based on the consistency of food and fluid. The IDDSI framework is made up of levels and describes food textures and drink thickness.



The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016 @<https://iddsi.org/framework/>.

## Notes

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