



Level 1: Slightly thick fluids

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

My **speech therapist's** name is: _____

Telephone number: _____

SLT recommendations

To thicken drinks to a safe consistency they need to be:

Level  1 Slightly thick

Other recommendations:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Why do I need thickened drinks?

Normal drinks move very fast and can easily run off the back of your tongue before you are ready to swallow.

Your swallow has been assessed by a qualified speech and language therapist. The assessment revealed that if you do not use thickener in your drinks you will be at increased risk of:

- Choking.
- Coughing.
- Liquids going down the wrong way.
- Repeated chest infections.
- Pneumonia.

How do I thicken drinks?

Use a prescribed thickening powder.

Follow the instructions on the tin to get the right consistency.

The instructions on the tin will tell you:

- How many scoops of thickener required in a drink to achieve the right consistency.
- In what order to add the thickening powder to the cup/glass (i.e. add powder first into a dry cup or add powder to the drink).

Prescribed thickening powder: _____

Number of scoops required: _____ per 200ml

Method: _____

Know the volume of drink that you will thicken to ensure the right amount of powder. This will help you get the right consistency.

Please store the thickening agent in a safe and secure place.

Accidental ingestion of the dry powder can be fatal.

What is Level 1, Slightly thick?

- Thicker than water.
- Requires a little more effort to drink than thin liquid.
- Can be sucked through a standard straw.

Flow test (for healthcare professionals): Rate of liquid flow through a 10ml syringe is such that there will be between 1ml – 4ml left in the syringe after 10 seconds.

Fluid intake

Aim to drink 8 cups or glasses or 6 mugs of fluid per day.

If you need to gain weight, include fortified drinks during the day:

- Milky tea or coffee made with fortified full cream milk.
- Malted drinks or hot chocolate made with fortified full cream milk.

- Milkshakes or smoothies (commercially-prepared or homemade).
- Commercially-prepared build-up drinks such as 'Complan' or 'Meritene' (available in sweet and savoury flavours).

Guidelines for safe drinking

- **Alert / Posture:** Make sure you are alert and sitting upright rather than lying back.
- **Take small sips:** It is usually best to have small sips of drink throughout the day rather than trying to drink large amounts in one go.
- **Take your time:** Do not hurry, relax and take your time.
- **Minimise distractions:** Try to ensure that you eat and drink in a quiet, distraction-free environment. Don't talk when drink is in your mouth.
- **Do not use a spouted cup unless recommended by your speech and language therapist:** A spouted cup encourages people to tip their head backwards – increasing the risk of fluid going into the lungs. The safest thing to drink from is a normal glass or mug. However, if this is not possible, try using a straw or spoon-feeding liquids.

In accordance with the International food and fluid descriptors labelled IDDSI May 2018 (www.IDDSI.org)

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