Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Speech and Language Therapy

Thickened fluids

A speech and language therapist has assessed your swallow. You may be at risk of normal fluids going down the wrong way into your airway. This is called aspiration.

A speech and language therapist can assess your swallow with different levels of thickened fluids. This helps to see if thickened fluids may reduce the risk of aspiration or make drinking easier and more comfortable.

The brand of thickener used at UHCW is **Nutilis Clear**. Other hospitals or community teams may recommend other brands.

How to make thickened fluids

We will explain how to thicken your drinks to the level recommended by your speech and language therapist. This is to help keep you safe when drinking.

1. Pour your chosen drink into a cup.
2. Add the recommended amount of thickener and stir straight away.
3. Let it stand for 1 minute until it reaches the correct thickness.

Levels of thickened fluid (using Nutilis Clear)

Level 1 – Slightly thick

Use 1 purple scoop of Nutilis Clear in 200ml of drink.

- Thicker than water
- Need a little more effort to drink than thin liquids
- Can be drunk through a straw

Level 2 -Mildly thick

Use 2 purple scoops of Nutilis Clear in 200ml of drink.

- It's sippable
- Pours quickly from a spoon
- Need effort to drink through a standard straw

Level 3 – Moderately thick

Use 3 purple scoops of Nutilis Clear in 200ml of drink.

- Can be drunk from a cup
- Flows slowly
- Needs more effort to swallow

Level 4 – Extremely thick

Use 7 purple scoops of Nutilis Clear in 200ml of drink.

- Too thick to drink from a cup
- Usually taken from a spoon
- Can't be sucked through a straw
- Falls off a spoon in a single spoonful and holds its shape on a plate

Things to remember

- A yellow sign from the speech and language therapist will be placed above your bed if you are on thickened fluids. This helps guide you, your family and staff.

- You will be sent home with 2 tubs of thickener when discharged. A prescription will also be sent to your GP.
- **All drinks, including hot drinks, must be thickened.**
- Do not have ice cream, cereal with milk, thin soup or gravy unless thickener is added.
- If your drink is not thickened correctly, you may be at risk of aspiration (fluid entering your airway).
- If you are using more or less than 200ml, adjust the amount of thickening powder.
- Drinks can thicken differently depending on temperature, texture or if they are fizzy.
- If you have been prescribed nutritional supplement drinks, these must also be thickened to the correct level. Your dietitian will advise you.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us on 024 7696 5709 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit: www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback

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