

# Thickening Drinks –

## Level 3 Moderately Thick Fluids



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## Why do I need thickened drinks?

You have been prescribed a drink thickener because thin fluids may be unsafe or uncomfortable for you to swallow.

Thin fluids travel quickly through the mouth and throat. This can sometimes result in them entering your airway or 'going down the wrong way' into your lungs. This is called **aspiration**. There is a possibility aspiration may lead to chest infections or pneumonia. Aspiration may also cause discomfort when swallowing.

To reduce the risk of aspiration, your Speech and Language Therapist may recommend having thickened drinks. Thicker liquids move more slowly, making it easier to control the liquid when swallowing.

Not everyone requires their fluids thickened to the same consistency. How thick the drink needs to be depends on individual needs.

## What are Level 3 Moderately Thick Fluids?

- Drips or 'dollops' slowly off a spoon.
- Can be drunk from a cup.
- Can be drunk through a wide straw with effort, but only if advised by a Speech and Language Therapist.

## Tips:

Some foods are considered to be "thin fluids", such as soup, sauces or medicines. These must also be thickened to the recommended consistency using the thickener. Also remember things like milk in cereal and fruit juice in fruit salad.

Ice-cream and jelly may require extra caution or be avoided if thickened fluids have been recommended, because they turn to thin fluid in the mouth.

**NOTE:** Instructions for use and dosage vary between different other brands of thickener that may be prescribed in the community (e.g. Resource, Thick & Easy). Please use according to instructions provided with your thickener and consult your GP.

## How do you mix it?

Always read the instructions on the tin/sachet. Use this leaflet together with the instructions which come with your prescribed thickener.

**Nutlis Clear** will be the thickener prescribed to you from the RUH. To use **Nutlis Clear**:



1. Using the scoop provided in the tin, add 3x levelled scoops into a 200 ml drink.
2. Stir the drink after adding the thickener, for around 30-60 seconds. To avoid lumps, start stirring as soon as possible using a fork or a whisk (not the scoop).
  - Some companies provide 'shakers' which allow easy mixing of the thickener into drinks. Alternatively, try using a jug with a lid – add the liquid and thickener and shake. For safety reasons, do not use the shaker when preparing hot drinks.
3. Leave the drink to stand for one minute to reach the required consistency.
  - Note: Do not add additional thickener during standing time as the liquid is continuing to thicken.



**NOTE:** Use the same amount of powder for hot and cold drinks. Discard drinks which have been sitting for over 30 minutes.

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## Thickening different drinks:

### Thickening **hot drinks/soups**:

- Allow the drink to cool slightly before adding Nutilis Clear.
- If thickening tea or coffee, always add milk and sugar (as per preference) to the drink before adding the powder.
- Follow the same preparation instructions as above.
- For safety reasons, do not use the shaker when preparing hot drinks.
- Nutilis Clear can be mixed with Cup-a-Soup – combine the powders first, then add water.

### Thickening **cold/carbonated drinks**:

- Stir carbonated drinks until the drink has gone flat, before adding the powder.
- Milk-based drinks, apple/orange juice take longer to thicken.
- Nutilis Clear can be mixed with alcohol.
- Follow the same preparation instructions as above.
- It is difficult to mix oral nutritional supplements – use the pre-thickened range instead (consult your GP or dietitian).



**BE AWARE:** Dry thickening powder can be dangerous if ingested or inhaled. Please keep out of the reach of people who may be at risk of inadvertently eating the powder (e.g. people with cognitive or visual problems).

**If you have any questions, please contact the Adult Speech & Language Therapy Department on 01225 821241.**

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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