

Thickened Drinks

Your speech and language therapist has recommended that you have thickened drinks.



You can use thickener in all types of hot and cold drinks.

Your speech and language therapist has agreed that thickened drinks may be helpful for you.

Your GP will prescribe a thickener product that you can use in your drinks.

Thickened drinks can include naturally thick drinks like smoothies and drinks with a thickener product added.

Thickened drinks move slower than thin drinks. This can help you control drinks in your mouth and may reduce the risk of them going into your airway. This could help you cough less when drinking, drink more and reduce the risk of chest infections.

Not everyone likes thickened drinks or finds them helpful. Your therapist will monitor you when you start using a thickener product and can talk you through the possible risks and benefits .

Please speak with your therapist if you are having any problems with your thickened drinks or you want more information.

If you are on supplement drinks you should let your speech and language therapist or dietitian know . Your drinks may need to be changed as they can be difficult to thicken.

It is important that you drink enough thickened drinks everyday to prevent dehydration. Aim for 8 cups a days. Please speak to your speech and language therapist, dietitian, doctor or nurse if you are having difficulties drinking enough.

The different levels of thickening

Your speech and language therapist will have recommended a specific level of thickness for your drinks



0 - Thin

1 - Slightly Thick

- Thicker than water
- Requires a little more effort to drink than thin liquids
- Flows through a straw or syringe

2 - Mildly Thick

- Flows off a spoon
- Sippable, pours quickly off a spoon but slower than thin drinks
- Effort is required to drink this thickness through a standard straw

3 - Moderately Thick

- Will not hold its shape on a spoon
- Can be drunk from a cup
- Some effort is required to suck through a standard or wide straw

4 - Extremely Thick

- Holds shape on a spoon
- Cannot be drunk from a cup
- Cannot be sucked through a straw
- Flows very slowly under gravity

Guidelines for thickening drinks

- It is important to thicken all fluids following the instructions on the tin
- Once you open a tin of thickener, you should store it in a cool dry place and use in line with the directions on the label
- Please refer to the label to check if your thickener is suitable for your individual needs e.g. gluten free, suitable for vegetarians, lactose intolerant or halal
- Thickeners are designed to mix easily with fluids and can be added to hot and cold drinks
- They can be added to alcoholic drinks if needed

Avoid ice cream, ice pops or jelly unless your speech and language therapist tells you they are okay for you. Ice cream and ice pops turn into thin liquid in the mouth and jelly breaks up into small pieces that can be hard to control.

Tips for thickening your drinks



Following the instructions on the tin correctly will mean that the drinks you thicken will keep their flavour and appearance



We recommend that you prepare the drink shortly before serving and use within two hours

General tips for useage:

- ✓ Use only the scoop provided in the tin
- ✓ Add all the powder at once and stir to dissolve
- ✓ Always use the correct number of scoops for the thickness level recommended
- ✓ Use level scoops rather than heaped scoops to avoid over thickening
- ✓ Always measure the liquid you need, for example 200ml
- ✓ To avoid lumps, stir as soon as you put the liquid and powder together
- ✓ Stir quickly until the thickener has fully dissolved
- ✓ To prevent air bubbles, stop stirring as soon as the powder has dissolved
- ✓ Leave the the drink to stand until it reaches the desired consistency.





Thickening hot drinks

Allow the drink to cool slightly before adding the thickener

If thickening tea or coffee, always add the milk and sugar to the drink and then mix with the powder



Thickening carbonated (fizzy) drink

For best results, stir fizzy drinks until the drink has gone nearly flat, and then mix with the powder



Milk

Leave to stand for slightly longer after mixing until the desired consistency is reached



Medication

If you are having problems swallowing any liquid medication, please speak to your GP or pharmacist. Do not thicken any medication without speaking to them for advice first



Liquids in Foods

Any liquid served with your meals should be as thick as your drinks

Soups, gravies, sauces and custard can be made so they are naturally thicker or a thickener can be added to these to thicken them

If you have any questions about thickening drinks, please contact your speech and language therapist.



**Your speech and
language therapist
has recommended
that you have
thickened drinks.**

For further help or information

Hull and East Riding Speech
and Language Therapy
Highlands Health Centre
Lothian Way
Hull
HU7 5DD
01482 335165

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it to improve our services.

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