



Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust



## **Level 2: Mildly 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  Mildly 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 2, Mildly thick?

- Flows off a spoon.
- Sippable, pours quickly from a spoon but slower than thin drinks.
- Mild effort needed to suck through a standard straw.

**Flow test (for healthcare professionals):** Rate of liquid flow through a 10ml syringe is such that there will be between 4ml – 8ml 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.

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*In accordance with the International food and fluid descriptors labelled IDDSI May 2018 ([www.IDDSI.org](http://www.IDDSI.org))*

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**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

Department: Adult Speech & Language Therapy, 0118 938 2136  
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