



**Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust**

PATIENT INFORMATION

Extremely Thick (Level 4 Fluid)

**A Guide to Safer Drinking
Using NUTILIS CLEAR**



Drinking and swallowing are actions we all take for granted. In reality these are complex but automatic processes which take place many times during the day. These actions may be affected by many different medical problems.

Problems with swallowing are known as **DYSPHAGIA**.

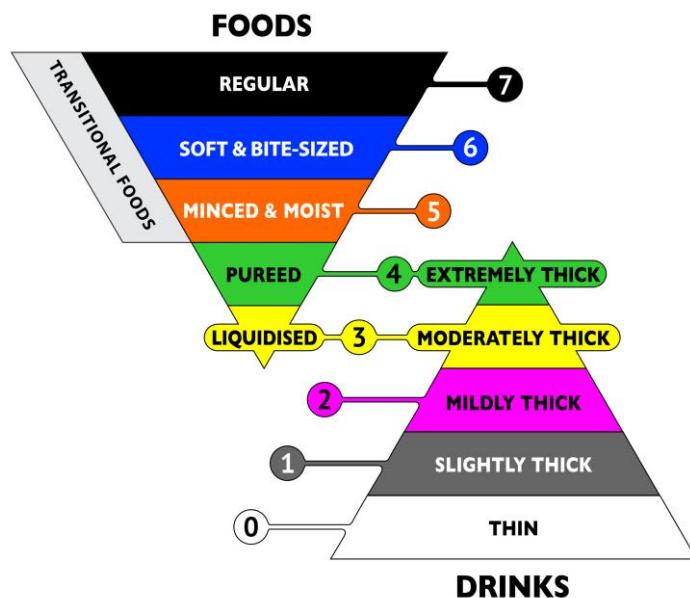
The advice in this leaflet will help you to drink more easily and safely.

Patient's Name

Date

Speech & Language Therapist

Tel No



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CAUTION: THICKENING POWDER

- Must be mixed with water or other fluid before consuming.
- There is an asphyxiation risk if dry powder is consumed
- Please ensure thickening powders are stored securely, as with all medicines, to prevent incorrect usage.

LEVEL 4 FLUID (EXTREMELY THICK)

What Is Thickening Powder?



It is a gum based powder.

It has been prescribed to alter the thickness of your drinks, not to boost your calorie intake.

It will not reduce the flavour of your drinks, just change the consistency.

Why Do I Need Thickening Powder?

A Speech and Language Therapist assessed your swallow and recommended that you thicken all drinks to a very thick texture to make your swallow safer.

How Does It Help?

You have been recommended to take Level 4 fluids (Extremely Thick) as you have displayed difficulties with swallowing normal drinks. It has been recommended you take Level 4 fluids because:

- Thicker fluids move more slowly, allowing time to control their movement through the mouth and throat
- Thicker fluids are also less likely to get left behind in the throat.

These qualities mean that the muscles and reflexes in the mouth and the throat are better able to close off the airway during a swallow so that none of the liquid can enter the lungs causing a chest infection

How Do I Use It?

Please follow the instruction on the tin of the thickener for the specified thickness (consistency). **TO MAKE A LEVEL 4 EXTREMELY THICK DRINK YOU NEED SEVEN LEVEL PURPLE SCOOPS OF NUTILIS CLEAR POWDER PER 200 MLS OF FLUID.**

Level 4 fluids

- **Cannot** be drunk via a straw or from a cup
- Need to be taken from a spoon
- It **cannot** be poured
- Falls off a spoon in a single spoonful when tilted and holds its shape on a plate
- No lumps
- Not sticky
- Liquid must not separate from solid

The required amount of powder can either be added to a dry cup/glass with the liquid added on top and **stirred for 1 minute** with a fork or shaken for a minute in a lidded beaker. Alternatively the liquid can be added first and whilst stirring the liquid the powder can be added and **stirred for 1 minute** using a fork.

Points to Remember:

1. Thickening powder can be added to any drink e.g. tea, coffee, squash, fruit juices, milk, hot chocolate, and soup, Complan, Fortisip, carbonated or alcoholic drinks.

2. If the Speech and Language Therapist has recommended Level 4 (extremely thick) liquids then please remember this applies to **any** liquids including hot and cold drinks and medicines*.

* When taking medications and it is recommended you take with water, you need to ensure that this drink of water is also thickened to Level 4 (extremely thick) fluid texture as advised by your Speech & Language Therapist. Please consult with your G.P or pharmacist if you have any concerns regarding taking medication with thickened fluids*

PLEASE NOTE : Different brands of Thickener exist. Please check your tin of thickener for preparation guidelines and seek further advice if required.

How Long Do I Take Thickened Fluid For?

We recommend that you continue to thicken all your drinks unless a speech and language therapist has told you that you no longer need to.

If you have been referred to the community speech and language therapist for a further review, you will then have another opportunity to discuss the correct consistency for you.

How Do I Get More Thickening Powder?

Some thickening powder should have been provided for you from the hospital if you have been discharged home from hospital.

Please contact your GP who can prescribe the thickening powder on prescription

SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE EATING AND DRINKING SAFER

Position: Make sure you are comfortable and relaxed
Sit as upright as possible whilst eating and drinking and for 30 minutes afterwards
Reduce distractions eg phone calls/TV when eating and drinking

Timing: Take time to enjoy your food and drink – don't rush
Do not worry about keeping up when eating and drinking with others
Try to eat and drink little and often – eat small, frequent meals and snacks
Avoid eating and drinking when tired

Mouth Care: It is essential to keep your mouth and teeth clean

- ask your Dentist/District Nurse for advice
- make sure they are aware you have difficulty swallowing

Medication: You may need to take your usual medication in a different form eg syrup or soluble

- ask your Doctor/Pharmacist for advice

SPECIAL ADVICE FOR YOU

Your Speech and Language Therapist will advise you if you also need to adjust the texture of your food.

REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST

- Frequent/reoccurring chest infections
- Coughing during or after eating and drinking
- Feeling of food getting stuck
- Difficulty swallowing your saliva
- Wet, gurgly voice following eating and drinking
- Tiring quickly when eating or meals take longer than 45 minutes
- Loss of appetite or interest in food and drink
- If you are unsure about any particular foods and drinks
- Weight changes

The Speech & Language Therapy Service cannot be held responsible for how patients/clients interpret and use this resource. Always consult your GP/relevant health professional if you have any health problems, comments or queries.

CONTACT DETAILS

Southport & Formby telephone 01704 387215

Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
Adult Speech and Language Therapy
91 Zetland Street
Southport. PR9 6DL

West Lancashire telephone 0300 247 0011

Virgin Care
Adult Speech and Language Therapy
Hilldale
Ormskirk Hospital
Wigan Road
Ormskirk L39 2JW

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust

Medical and Surgical Team Speech and Language
Therapists 01704 704361
Stroke Therapy Speech and Language Therapists 01704
704940

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

Please call 01704 704714 if you need this leaflet in an alternative format

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

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Southport & Formby District General Hospital
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FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

We would welcome your feedback about your experience at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.

Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following link:

<https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/>

Thank you

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