



# Extremely Thick Fluids

## Information for patients with dysphagia and their carers

**This leaflet aims to answer your questions about changing the consistency of your fluids to help you swallow safely. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your speech and language therapist, GP or nurse.**

### What is dysphagia?

Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing difficulties.

Some people with dysphagia have problems swallowing certain foods or liquids, while others can't swallow at all. Your speech and language therapist has recommended changing the consistency of your liquids to make them safer to swallow.

### What has my speech and language therapist recommended?

Due to the nature of your dysphagia, it has been recommended that you drink only extremely thick drinks (level 4). This means drinks that:

- Are usually eaten with a spoon (fork is possible).
- Cannot be drunk from a cup.
- Cannot be sucked through a straw.
- Show some slow movement under gravity but cannot be poured.
- Fall off spoon in a single spoonful when tilted and continue to hold shape on a plate.
- Are not sticky.
- Have no lumps.
- The liquid must not separate from solid.

These instructions apply to:

- **All hot and cold liquids**, including water, juice, squash, tea and coffee.
- Soups, sauces and gravy.
- **Any liquid medications.**
- Any nutritional supplements.

### **How can I make my fluids extremely thick?**

To achieve an extremely thick consistency, add **six scoops** of Resource® ThickenUp™ powder per 200ml of liquid. Other products are available and the method and amount of thickening powder required will vary according to the product you are using. You should always speak to your Speech and Language Therapist for more information.

**Please note that thickener is a prescription medication and should only be used as directed.**

### **Instructions for preparing thickened fluids**

To prepare thickened fluids:

1. Add the recommended amount of thickening powder using the scoop provided in a dry cup.
2. Measure the liquid (water, tea, juice or soup, for example) into the cup.
3. Stir the mixture vigorously using a fork or small whisk until the powder is well dissolved.
4. Stir gently for a further one to two minutes.
5. Leave to stand for a few minutes until the drink reaches the required thickness.

**It is important that you do not add additional powder during standing time, as the liquid will continue to thicken.**

For optimal results and safety please allow hot drinks (with a temperature of over 60°C) to cool slightly before adding to the thickening powder.

### Additional safety and storage of thickening powder

Once a tin/packet is opened, it should be stored in a cool, dry place.



**Please ensure that people who need supervision to eat and drink safely do not have unsupervised access to thickening powder, as dry thickening powder can be a choking hazard. Consider storing the thickener out of reach if necessary.**

### Checking consistency: fork drip test

There are a few different ways to check you have the right consistency.

- An extremely thick fluid should sit in a mound/pile above the fork.
- A small amount may flow through and form a tail below the fork prongs but should not flow or drip continuously through the fork prongs.



## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your speech and language therapy team (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm):

Acute/ General medical speech and language therapy:

020 8725 3007

Adult neurology speech and language therapy:

020 8725 4492

Stroke speech and language therapy:

020 8725 2001

Head and neck speech and language therapy:

020 8725 1163

Community Neuro-therapy speech and language therapy:

020 8812 4060

### Queen Mary's Hospital:

Mary Seacole speech and language therapy:

020 8487 6146

Bryson White rehabilitation speech and language therapy:

020 8487 6170

### Wolfson Neurorehabilitation:

Queen Mary's Hospital                      020 8487 6142

St George's Hospital                        020 8266 6549

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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