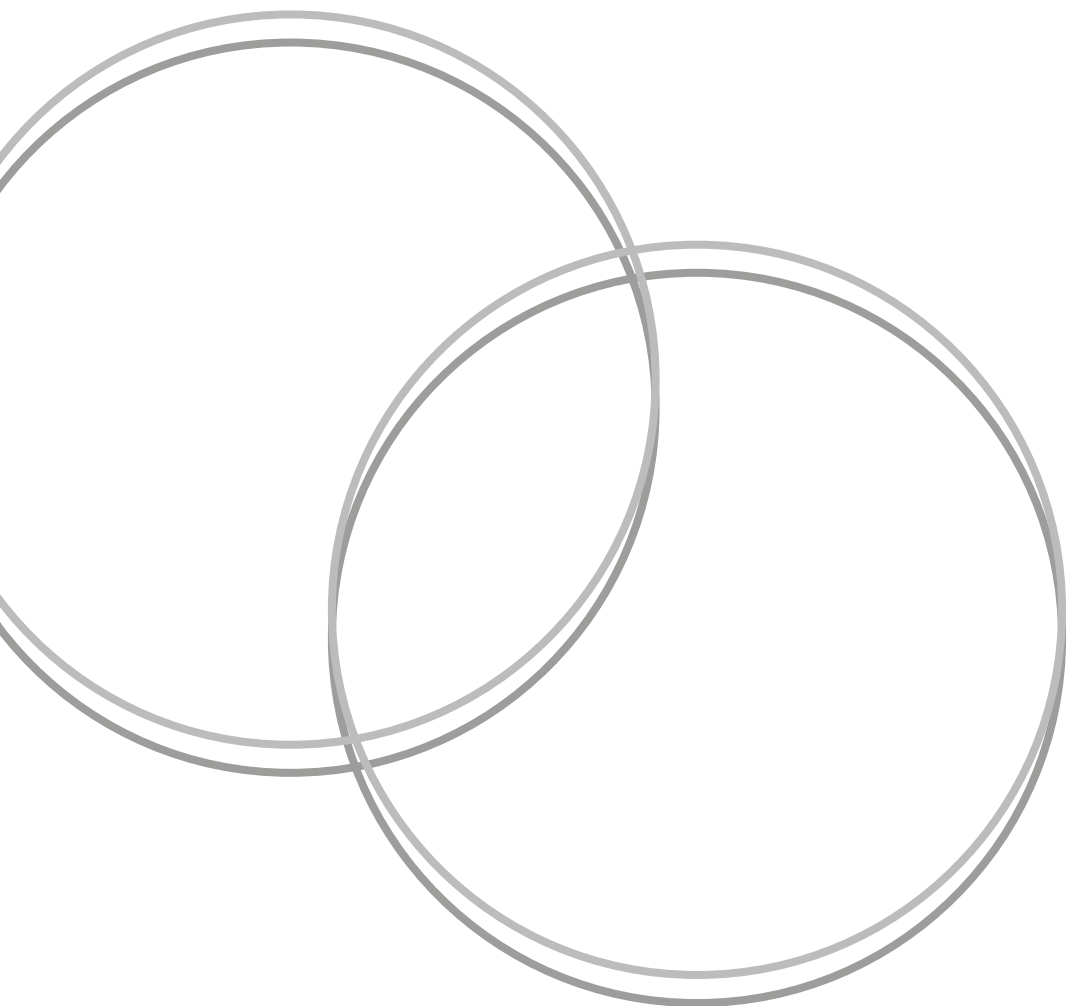




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Thickening your drinks: Level 4



## Why thicken your drinks?

Difficulties swallowing liquids can be caused by muscle weakness, coordination problems, or physical changes following surgery.

If swallowing liquid causes coughing or choking, the drink may be going “down the wrong way” into your lungs.

Thickened liquids move more slowly as they are swallowed and this can reduce the risk of liquids going down the wrong way, helping you swallow more safely.

In this way, you can continue to drink safely but reduce the likelihood of developing a chest infection or pneumonia.

## The thickness of drink that has been recommended for you is: Level 4

### **Description**

Cannot be drunk from a cup or through a straw.

Needs to be taken from a spoon.

## Thickening powders

Thickening powders are available on prescription to make drinks to the recommended thickness. Thickeners can be added to all drinks, hot and cold, but you may find that some drinks are more palatable than others. People often prefer thickened hot chocolate to thickened tea or coffee and, in general, many prefer thickened cold drinks to thickened hot drinks. Soups can be thickened in the same way as drinks.

# How to thicken your drinks

Instructions for thickening drinks are given by individual product manufacturers and are a guide only.

Please note that fluids can thicken differently depending on the type and temperature of the drink.

The label on the tin of thickener provides advice on the amount of thickener to use. A scoop is provided in each new tin.

To make a Level 4 drink using "Resource ThickenUp Clear", add the desired quantity of powder (6 scoops per 200ml of liquid) to an empty glass. Then add liquid into the glass and stir with a spoon/ fork until completely dissolved.

## Important

Milky drinks are more difficult to thicken and may go lumpy if only whisked with a fork. A 'shaker' or other container with a secure screw lid can be used. If you have been prescribed a thickener other than "Resource ThickenUp Clear", please follow the guidelines on the tin.

### Other safer swallowing recommendations:

### Your Speech and Language Therapist is:

Name: .....

Telephone: .....

## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Produced by registered Dietitians and Speech and Language therapists.  
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