

Thickened drinks

Speech and Language Therapy [patient information](#)

What are thickened drinks?

They are normal drinks which have a powder called 'thickener' added to them. This causes the drink to get thicker. The powder does not have any flavour.

The brand of the thickening powder may vary. In this hospital we use 'thick and easy clear'.

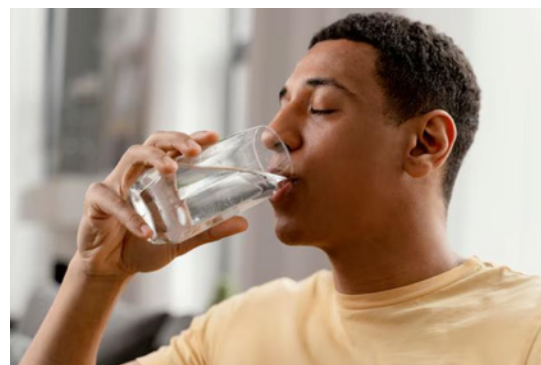


Why do I need thickened drinks?

Speech and Language Therapy have assessed you and advised that thickened drinks may be helpful.

When you drink, your swallowing muscles need to quickly move into the right place. Regular drinks can be hard to control. They can go down the 'wrong way' into the airway (aspiration). This can cause chest infections.

Thickened drinks move more slowly. For some people, they are easier to swallow. They can lower the chance of them going down the 'wrong way'.



How do I use the powder?

In hospital, the ward team will make drinks for you. They will follow the advice from your Speech Therapist. There are four different levels of thickness. If you still need thickened drinks when you leave hospital, we will give you information about how to do this. Ask your Speech Therapist for more information.

Benefits of thickened drink	Risks of thickened drinks
• They can reduce symptoms such as coughing. • They can be more comfortable to swallow. • They reduce risk of aspiration and chest infection. • Improved hydration. • Lower chance of hospital admission. • Improved quality of life.	• Some people do not like thickened drinks. This can impact quality of life. • They can be prepared incorrectly if the instructions are not followed. • They can affect how much someone drinks. They can make people feel full. • It can be more effort to swallow. • They can make chest infections worse if they are aspirated.

Tips for thickened drinks

- People often like to use the powder with **flavoured drinks** more than water. Squash, juice, tea, coffee and hot chocolate are normally available on the ward.
- Families can bring drinks from home. **Please give the drink to a member of staff.** We will label the drink and then thicken it for you.
- If your family brings in a **naturally thicker drink** (e.g. smoothie) please **speak to Speech and Language Therapy**. We will test the drink to see whether it is the right thickness.
- Thickened drinks **should not contain lumps**. If your drink has lumps, let a member of staff know as soon as you can. Ask for a new drink.
- Please do not thicken drinks until you have been trained by Speech and Language Therapy.



Contact details

0300 019 8052

To read this leaflet in a different language,
please visit our website: www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets
and use the language and accessibility function available along the top of the site.

To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499**
or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

The Royal Bournemouth Hospital, Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW
Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: **Ellen O'Connell** Date: **October 2025** Version: **One** Review date: **October 2028** Ref: **115/25**

w: www.uhd.nhs.uk



@uhdnhs.bsky.social



@UHDTrust



@uhd_nhs