

Thickened Liquids Diet

We have recommended a thickened liquids diet. This diet is helpful if you have dysphagia.

Dysphagia is a condition where you have difficulty swallowing. If you cannot swallow fluids and food properly, it may go into your lungs and can cause pneumonia. However, if you thicken liquids, you may lessen your chances of choking.

What are thickened liquids?

Thickened liquids are liquids that have an ingredient added to them to make them thicker and easier for you to swallow. This ingredient is called a thickener.

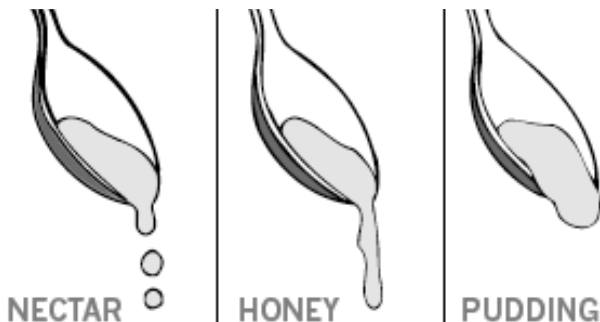
Examples of thickeners include:

- Special thickening powder (such as Nestlé™ Resource® Thicken Up®, Nestlé™ Resource® Thicken Up® Clear, or SimplyThick®)
- Instant infant cereals
- Potato flakes
- Corn starch
- Puréed baby fruit.

How do I make thickened liquids with a thickening powder?

1. Pour the liquid (such as water, milk or juice) into a bowl or cup.
2. While stirring quickly with a whisk, fork or blender (on low speed), slowly add thickening powder or thickening liquid.
3. Blend well, but DO NOT over-blend.
4. Let it stand for 5 minutes.
5. If it is too thick, add more liquid and stir well. If it is too thin, add more thickening powder or thickening liquid. Blend, and then wait 5 minutes again. Repeat until you get the thickness you want.

Your Dietitian or Speech Language Pathologist will show you how to thicken liquids. You should thicken liquids to a consistency of either (circle one):



Helpful Hints on Preparing Thickened Liquids



- See directions on thickening powder/liquid labels for general guidelines on how much powder/liquid to add. Each thickener may have a different method to thicken.
- You may want to thicken extra portions and keep it in the fridge to drink during the day. **Remember to re-stir before serving.**
- If allowed, you can flavour your milk with chocolate mix or flavoured cereal powders for variety.
- Add a squeeze of lemon or lime juice to your thickened water for flavour.
- If your beverage is not sweet enough, you can add sugar or artificial sweetener.
- To thicken soup, prepare your soup with a lot of pasta, rice, or potato and then purée. You can also purée your soup using thickening powder/liquid or instant potato flakes to thicken.

How can I make sure I am drinking enough liquids?

- Drink thickened liquids during meals and at snacks.
- Look at the colour of your urine. If it is dark yellow, it may mean you are not getting enough liquids.
- Other signs that you are not getting enough liquids include dry mouth, dry eyes and dry skin.

How can I maintain good bowel function?

- Make sure you drink enough liquids.
- Choose foods with fibre. Include soft vegetables or fruits and whole grains.
- Try thickened prune juice or prunes.
- Your doctor may prescribe a laxative if you need one - **never use mineral oil for constipation.** Speak to your pharmacist for over-the-counter products.

What general guidelines should I follow?

- Follow **Canada's Food Guide** to plan meals.
- Sit upright for meals. Do not lie down for at least 15 to 30 minutes after each meal or snack.
- Remove any distractions at meal times.
- Take small mouthfuls of thickened liquids. Half to one teaspoonful at a time (use small spoons).
- Make sure you swallow the food inside your mouth before taking your next bite.
- Do not wash down food with liquids. This may cause you to choke.
- Before and after each meal, clean your mouth well using non-alcohol based mouthwash and swab to prevent infection.
- Keep your mouth and lips moist - **never use mineral oil or petroleum jelly inside the mouth.**

Where can I buy thickening powders?

You may buy commercial thickening powder products from:

- **Your pharmacist**
- **Specialty Food Shop. The Hospital for Sick Children** (Main Floor, Concourse)
555 University Ave., Toronto, Ont. M5G 1X8
Tel: 1 (800) 737-7976
- **Ontario Medical Supply**
Tel: 1 (800) 267-1069
- **Total Health Pharmacy**
Medical Professional Building
2115 Finch Avenue W.,
Downsview, Ont. M3N 2V6
Tel: (416) 746-2044

Where can I find more information?

Specialty Food Shop. The Hospital for Sick Children (Main Floor, Concourse)
555 University Ave., Toronto, Ont. M5G 1X8
Tel: (416) 977-4360
Toll-free: 1 (800) 737-7976
<http://www.specialtyfoodshop.com>

The Dysphagia Cookbook: Great Tasting and Nutritious Recipes for People with Swallowing Difficulties

By: Elayne Achilles, Todd Levine, and Pamela Mathy.
<http://www.amazon.ca>



You are on a Special Diet.

If your family or friends are planning to provide you with food from home while you are in the hospital, please make sure they check with a member of the health care team first. See below for contact information.



Whom can I contact?

Registered Dietitian:

Speech-Language Pathologist:

Other Suggestions:
