

Thickened Fluids

Information for: _____ Date: _____

Why must I drink thick fluids?

You cannot swallow thin fluids safely at this time. Some examples of thin fluids are water, juice, tea, coffee, and soup. These fluids move too quickly and are hard to control in your mouth. If you drink thin fluids, they may go down your airway. If this happens, you could choke or, if the fluid goes into your lungs, you may get an infection. Lung infections, also known as pneumonia, can be very serious.

What do I need to avoid?

1) Thin fluids:

Examples: water, juice, tea, coffee, milk, thin soups (including broth or consommé), and soda pop.

2) Foods that melt or release juice:

- Ice cubes, popsicles, gelatin (Jell-O®), ice cream, sherbet, milkshakes and other icy drinks melt at room temperature, becoming thin fluids.
- Some juicy fruits, like melons, contain thin liquid, and should also be avoided.

3) Mixed consistency of liquid with solids:

Examples: cold cereal with milk or lumpy soups like chicken noodle, chowders or minestrone.

What can I drink instead?

Drink only naturally thick and thickened fluids. This handout provides information on the type of thickened fluids recommended for you and how to make or purchase thickened fluids.

Which fluid thickness is right for me?



___ Nectar thick

Nectar thick fluids pour slowly from a cup or spoon.
Examples: eggnog, buttermilk, V8 Vegetable Juice®



___ Honey thick

Honey thick fluids pour very slowly from a spoon or cup.
Examples: honey, yogurt, tomato sauce



___ Pudding thick

Pudding thick fluids are very thick and need a spoon to eat.
They hold their shape and are firm. Examples: pudding, greek yogurt, applesauce

How much thickened fluid do I need every day?

You need to drink _____ cups (_____ mL) per day.

Thickened beverages, thickened soups, and pureed fruits and vegetables all count towards your fluid goal.

Where do I get thickened fluids?

1) You can thicken fluids using common foods:

Thicken soups using any of the following:

- Pureed vegetables – carrots, squash or jarred baby food vegetables
- Mashed potatoes – homemade or instant potato flakes
- Rice cereal (for babies)
- Ricotta cheese
- Soft tofu – flavoured or plain
- Pureed cottage cheese
- Pureed meat – jarred baby food meat or puree your own

Thicken smoothies by adding any of these to blender:

- Banana – fresh or frozen
- Mango – packaged frozen mango
- Cooked vegetables – carrots or beets
- Yogurt – regular or Greek yogurt
- Ricotta cheese
- Soft tofu
- Cottage cheese
- Avocado

*** DO NOT ADD ICE OR ICE CREAM TO YOUR SMOOTHIES ***

THICKEN OTHER BEVERAGES USING:

- Instant pudding or custard powder
- Pureed fruit – applesauce or puree canned fruit

THICKEN SAUCES USING:

- Flour, cornstarch or rice cereal for babies.

2) You can buy naturally thick fluids:

- An example of a naturally thick fluid is yogurt drinks (eg YOP®). Depending on the fluid thickness recommended for you, you may need to thicken these fluids more by using common foods listed on the previous page, or a thickener (see next tip).

3) You can thicken fluids using store-bought thickeners:

- Your local pharmacy may have thickening powders or pre-thickened beverages in stock or may be able to order them in for you.
- Thickeners work differently. Follow the directions on the package of any store-bought thickeners. Some thickeners will get thicker if you let them sit. Hot liquids may require more or less thickening powder depending on the type of thickener used.

The names of some commercial thickening powders include:

Powder sold in stores + online	Currently sold online only
~ Resource Thicken-Up® Clear	~ Simply Thick® Liquid Gel thickener
~ Thik & Clear®	~ Hormel Thick & Easy® Clear
~ Kingsmill Quick-Thick®	Instant Food & Beverage Thickener
~ Thick It®	

Stores near Vancouver General Hospital and Lions Gate Hospital where thickeners are kept in stock are:

Shoppers Drug Mart (Diamond Health Care Centre) 2730 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC 604-714-1127	Lancaster Medical Supplies #1 - 601 West Broadway Vancouver, BC 604-873-8585	Davies Pharmacy 1401 St. Georges Avenue North Vancouver, BC 604 985-8771
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Other Tips to Help You Stay Safe and Healthy

- Do not use a straw unless approved by your swallowing therapist.
- Sit upright for at least 30 minutes after eating or drinking.
- Floss and brush your teeth at least twice daily.

Other Recommendations:

HealthLinkBC is another reliable source for health information. Dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a pharmacist about medication, or a dietitian about other nutrition concerns or a nurse about any health concern.

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