

# Modified Fluids

Modified fluids are made by adding thickening powder into drinks or liquid foods. This thickens the consistency of drinks or liquid foods. This may help some people swallow easier and safely.

## Why do we need modified fluids?

- Thin fluids that we normally drink may enter the lungs due to a swallowing impairment.
- Thickened fluids are easier to control and reduces the risk of fluids entering the lungs.



## How to prepare modified fluids

<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Level 1: Slightly Thick</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare 200ml of fluids</li> <li>• Add 1 flat scoop of thickener</li> <li>• Stir immediately for 30 seconds and wait for 1 minute</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Level 2: Mildly Thick</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare 200ml of fluids</li> <li>• Add 2 flat scoops of thickener</li> <li>• Stir immediately for 30 seconds and wait for 1 minute</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Level 3: Moderately Thick</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare 200ml of fluids</li> <li>• Add 4 flat scoops of thickener</li> <li>• Stir immediately for 30 seconds and wait for 1 minute</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Level 4: Extremely Thick</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare 200ml of fluids</li> <li>• Add 6 flat scoops of thickener</li> <li>• Stir immediately for 30 seconds and wait for 1 minute</li> </ul>

Feed with:

Teaspoon  Tablespoon  Cup  Straw  Syringe ( \_\_\_\_ ml)

## What to thicken

- All drinks (e.g., coffee, tea, milo, juices, soy milk, oral nutritional supplements, carbonated drinks, herbal drinks)
- Soup, gravy and sauces



## Other considerations

- Milk-based and juice-based liquids need to be stirred for a longer time to achieve the desired consistency.
- Thickener can be added to both hot and cold fluids.
- Please thicken oral nutritional supplements as advised by your Speech Therapist below:

Oral nutritional supplement brand: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended fluid consistency: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of thickener to add: \_\_\_\_\_ scoops

Time to wait: \_\_\_\_\_ mins

## Food to avoid

- Ice cream (if requiring Level 3 or 4 consistency)
- Juicy/watery fruits (e.g. orange, watermelon)
- Jelly



## Testing fluid consistencies using the fork drip test

The fork drip checks the thickness and cohesiveness of a fluid by looking at how it flows through or holds together on the prongs of a fork. Caregivers may use the fork drip test as a guide to decide if a fluid needs to be thickened or not.

Steps:

1. Use a clean fork
2. Submerge the fork into the fluids and then lift up a sample

### Level 1 Slightly Thick

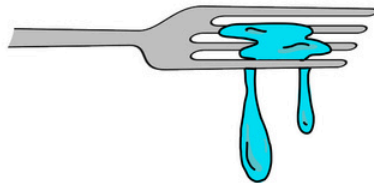
- Fluid flows quickly through prongs of fork.
- Leaves a thin coating on 1/3 or less of the fork.

### Level 2 Mildly Thick

- Fluid flows fairly quickly through prongs of fork.
- Leaves a visible coating on the fork.

### Level 3 Moderately Thick

- Drips slowly or in dollops/strands through the prongs of a fork.
- A small amount of fluid is left on the fork.



### Level 4 Extremely Thick

- A small amount may flow through and form a short tail below the fork.
- Sits in a mound or pile above the fork and is able to hold its shape.



## Encouraging Fluid Intake

- Add a small amount of syrup e.g. Ribena cordial for taste.
- Preparing fluids with some cut fruits / fruit juices.
- Serve the thickened fluids cold.

# Feeding Practices

## Safe feeding strategies

- Do not serve liquids and solids in the same mouthful.
- Feed at a slow rate
- Sit upright while feeding, do not feed lying down.
- Give rest if any shortness of breath is observed.
- Feed the next spoon only after the previous spoonful has been swallowed.

## Signs to look out for when feeding

- Coughing when eating/drinking
- Throat clearing when eating/drinking
- Gurgly voice
- Increase in breathing rate



## What do you do when you notice these?

1. Stop feeding and give rest for 10 minutes.
2. Try feeding again.
3. If signs are still present, thicken fluids to the next level of thickness.
4. Call the hospital hotline to make an appointment with the Speech Therapist.
5. Note: If persistent cough and phlegm is noted, please consult a doctor



If you or your loved one is losing weight, have any questions on nutrition, or are experiencing difficulties with swallowing, please do not hesitate to contact us at 6363 3000 or [enquiry@wh.com.sg](mailto:enquiry@wh.com.sg).

Contributed by Speech Therapy, Rehabilitation, Allied Health Services

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