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# Thickening Liquids at Home

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## Why do I have to thicken my liquids?

Your medical team has decided you are at risk for swallowing problems which occur when fluid or food “go down the wrong way” and end up in your lungs. This is a problem because it can lead to pneumonia. Making your liquids thick may help to reduce your risk of developing pneumonia.

## What needs to be thickened?

All thin liquids need to be thickened before you eat or drink them. Here is a list of liquids that must be thickened:

- Water
- Juices
- Milk
- Coffee and Tea (hot or iced)
- Thin Gravies and Sauces
- Ice Cream (melts to a thin liquid)
- Soda Pop
- Soups
- Supplements (Ensure®, Boost®, et

## How thick should my liquids be?

Your medical team will tell you how thick your liquids should be. They will order one of the following levels:

- Nectar-Like
- Honey-Like
- Spoon Thick

Your thickness level is \_\_\_\_\_

## What do I use to thicken the liquids?

The VA will provide a thickening powder product for you to use at home. You will receive and renew the thickening product through the pharmacy using the same process as you do for your medications

## Directions for Use of Powder Thickener

1. For best results, consume liquids within 1 hour of preparation. **You must read the specific directions listed on your thickener package to thicken liquids correctly.**

- Nectar-Like = 2-3 Teaspoons of powder to ½ cup (4 oz) of liquid
- Honey-Like = 3-5 Teaspoons of powder to ½ cup (4 oz) of liquid
- Spoon Thick = 5-6 Teaspoons of powder to ½ cup (4 oz) of liquid

2. Measure the thickener carefully using level teaspoons.

3. Slowly add the powder to the liquid while stirring briskly with a spoon, fork, or wire whisk.

4. Once thickener has dissolved, let the thickened liquid stand for 1 minute before drinking.

5. More thickener can be added if needed.

### How long will I have to thicken my liquids for?

Some people will have to always thicken their liquids. You should continue to thicken your liquids until told otherwise by your medical team.



**Central Texas Veterans Health Care System**

**Questions, please call  
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