

SLP-chosen for you, from the Nicespeechlady.com library SPEECH PATHOLOGY PATIENT: _____

SPEECH PATHOLOGIST: _____

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: _____



DATE: _____

HANDOUT-ABLE: Thickening Liquids to Honey Consistency/“Moderately Thick”

You or someone you care for has been identified as having a swallowing problem. The recommendation is for honey-thick/“moderately-thick” liquids, among other instructions. Below are suggestions on how to prepare honey-thick/“moderately-thick” liquids most effectively.

How to:

- As a general rule, four ounces of a thin liquid can be thickened to honey-thick consistency/“moderately thick” by stirring in two tablespoons of traditional powdered thickener into the liquid vigorously. Instructions also tend to be listed on the container.
- This amount of thickener will vary, based upon the specific thin liquids, and their temperature.
- Continue to stir it, preferable with a fork, to the desired consistency. The fork provides more surface area for stirring.
- Stir it as soon as the powder touches the liquid, as soon as possible — to avoid clumping.
- After one to three minutes of stirring, add more thickener if it is too thin, and add more liquid if it is too thick.
- Take care to thicken to honey-thick/“moderately-thick” consistency. There are terms to utilize, such as from The International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative. There are other terms that can be commonly utilized. The hierarchy of thicknesses are, from thinnest to thickest:
 - thin (like water),
 - between thin and nectar-thick (like very slightly thick orange juice) — IDDSI calls this “Slightly Thick”;
 - nectar-thick (a thick orange juice); — IDDSI calls this “Mildly Thick”;
 - **honey-thick (thick like honey), — IDDSI calls this “Moderately Thick”;** and,
 - pudding-thick — IDDSI calls this “Extremely Thick.”
- Flow test processes are important for patients, families and caregivers to understand. <https://iddsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IDDSI-Flow-Test-April-2016.pdf><https://iddsi.org/framework/> (See The International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative 2016 @<https://iddsi.org/framework/>).

Factors to take into account:

- All liquids need to be thickened to this consistency. Your speech pathologist made this recommendation to your doctor on what is indicated based on a full evaluation. If you ever had questions about how to thicken liquids, ask your speech pathologist. It is important that if thickened liquids are recommended, that the instructions of your speech pathologist be followed — for safety. It is recommended that you continue these instructions until given different recommendations by a speech pathologist.
- Until further notice, it is recommended to thicken your liquids or purchase pre-thickened liquids.

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- As a general rule, it is difficult to drink thickened liquids through a straw. Ask your speech pathologist if it has been observed that there are no clinically overt sign/symptoms of aspiration with a straw. Do not drink from a straw unless you are cleared by your speech pathologist.
- When brushing your teeth, be sure to spit out all remaining fluid once you are done. Be mindful to not swallow any of the water utilized in tooth-brushing.
- All liquids need to be thickened, including: water, coffee, sodas, juices, drink mixes, liquid medications, etc.
- Powder thickener can be purchased at pharmacies. Ask your speech pathologist if a prescription is required in your state or region. Gel thickeners are also available, as well as hybrid powder-gel products. Amounts of gel or hybrid thickeners vary if different products are utilized, as compared to traditional powdered thickener.
- Thicken immediately before drinking. Powdered thickeners in liquid that are left out over time thicken even more, unfortunately.
- Thickened liquids are more palatable if served as cold as possible if they are cooler drinks, and as warm as possible if they are warmer drinks.
- Don't use ice, as it will thin out the liquid as it melts.
- If you thicken sodas or other carbonated beverages, they will fizz quite a bit when the thickener is added. Only pour about 1/3 to half a cup filled with a soda or other carbonated beverages prior to thickening, due to this.
- Try thickening juices or other drinks — rather than just plain tap water — as it tends to be more palatable. Many people dislike plain water that is thickened. Try adding cranberry juice, or a juice mix. It is recommended to flavor the water in some capacity to taste.
- If for some reason the liquids do not thicken to the desired consistency in following the directions on the package of thickener, give it about a minute or two to fully thicken. As a general rule, it is better to over-thicken a bit than to under-thicken if you are going to error on either side.
- For thickening food, such as soup, the powdered thickener can be utilized, or you can use a general food starch, or potato flakes, which tend to be less expensive.
- Encouraging fluids is very important. You are at an immediate risk for dehydration if you are receiving thickened liquids now that there is an additional step required for access to hydration.
- Receiving modified liquids can be temporary or more long-term. Finding ways to make the transition easiest can aid in the process. Hopefully the above instructions are helpful to you.

Other tips specific to you: