How to Thicken Liquids
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For many people with swallowing problems, it is safer to drink thick liquids. Thick liquids pour off a spoon slowly like honey.

There are thickened liquids you can buy at a drugstore:
• Resource® Thickened Juice
• Resource® Thickened Milk
• Resource® Thickened Water
• Imperial Sysco® Thickened Juice
• Imperial Sysco® Thickened Sweet Tea
• Imperial Sysco® Thickened Water

You can thicken liquids using store-bought thickeners like:
• Resource® ThickenUp® Powder
• Resource® Thicken Up® Clear
• Thick-n-Easy® Powder
• Thick-It® Powder
• Simply Thick® Gel (order online)
• Hydra~Aid® Gel (order online)

You can thicken liquids using household thickeners such as:
• Infant rice cereal - for soup, milk, milkshakes
• Instant pudding powder - for milk, milkshakes
• Instant potato flakes - for blended soups
What to do when using thickeners:

- Follow directions on package of store-bought thickeners.
- Use a wire whisk for mixing.
- Start with 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of thickener.
- Add thickener to the liquid and mix.
- Slowly add more thickener until it is the thickness you want.
- Serve right away after mixing. Some thickeners will get thicker if you let them sit.

More tips for thickening liquids

**Juice**
To create a thickened juice, add 2 tablespoons (30mL) of fruit juice to ½ cup (125mL) pureed fruit or baby food fruit.

**Pop**
Whisk before adding thickener.

**Milk**
Try adding 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of vanilla to milk before thickening to improve flavour. Or try instant pudding powder as the thickener.

Try adding chocolate or strawberry syrup to thickened milk for more flavours.
**Water**  
Add lemon juice to water before thickening. It really makes the flavour better!  
Try thickening flavoured bottled water or adding flavour packets like Crystal Light®, Nestea® or Kool-aid® for a different taste.

**Tea/Coffee**  
Cooling hot drinks before adding powder thickeners works best.

**Smoothies**  
Add yogurt to pureed fruit to get the right consistency. Do not use ice cream or other frozen products.

**Avoid all thin liquids**

Thin liquids include any food or drink that is thin when left at room temperature. The following are thin liquids to avoid:

- Ice cream
- Popsicles®
- Ice chips
- Jell-O®
Dehydration

Dehydration can happen if you don’t drink enough liquid.

Signs of mild to moderate dehydration:

- Thirst
- Headache
- Less urine output
- Urine is dark in colour
- Urine has a strong smell
- Dry, sticky mouth
- Cracked lips
- Dry skin
- Reduced skin turgor - Skin doesn’t bounce back quickly when pinched on the back of the hand or forearm
- Little or no appetite
- Feeling agitated and restless
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling tired
- Muscle weakness
Your total daily fluid requirement

How much thickened liquid you need will depend on your age, activity, drugs, and health. You may need to increase your liquid intake when you are more active or during hot weather.

Urine colour is the best way to check for dehydration. Your urine should be clear and pale yellow. Drink regular amounts of thick liquids throughout the day. If you drink a lot at once, your kidneys will simply flush the excess fluid away.

Your total daily thickened liquid requirement is:


of caffeine-free thick liquids per day.

Seek medical advice if you have:

- Fever
- Chest congestion
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing during or after meals
- Extreme thirst
- No urine output for 8-12 hours
- Moderate diarrhea for 5 or more days
- Severe diarrhea for 2 or more days
- Vomiting for more than 12-24 hours
- Confusion
- Increased drowsiness
- Seizure
- Uncontrolled high blood sugars
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