

How long will I need to thicken my liquids?

This depends on how you are progressing. Before you can drink thin liquids again, your speech pathologist may want you to have:

- Therapy to strengthen your swallow and help you swallow safely
- A *barium swallow study* to find out if you are still aspirating

Barium Swallow Study

For this study, you will drink barium sulfate and then have an X-ray taken of your throat. This can be done during your hospital stay or after your discharge. We will tell you more about this study as needed.

Where can I buy the thickener?

You can buy thickener in powdered form for mixing, or in pre-mixed bottles. You can find both forms at most drugstores and pharmacies. Read more about thickeners and order products at these websites:

- www.hormelhealthlabs.com
- <http://thickit.com/products/beverages>
- www.thickenupclear.com

How do I use the thickening powder?

- **Follow directions on the package of the thickener that you buy.** For most products, you will add the thickener to the liquid and stir for 20 seconds. Let it sit for about 2 minutes before drinking.
- **Thicken all beverages before drinking them.** This includes water, milk, Ensure, juice, soda, coffee, and tea. All liquids can be thickened, even carbonated beverages. But, these drinks will lose their carbonation when the thickener is added.

Only a few beverages are thick enough to drink without adding thickener. Two of these are tomato juice and eggnog.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Speech Pathology: Call
206.597.3295, Monday through
Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

What foods should I avoid?

Unless your speech pathologist says it is OK, do **not** eat or drink:

- **Broth-based soups.** Try cream-based soups and chowders instead. Or, add thickening powder to soups before eating.
- **Fresh or canned fruit.** Most fruits are juicy, and can cause problems with swallowing. A fresh banana is OK.
- **Ice cream and Jell-O.** When ice cream and Jello-O melt in your mouth, they become a thin liquid. Ask your speech pathologist about other options.