

Thickeners Guidance

In 2019, starch-based thickeners were replaced with gum-based thickeners across Norfolk & Waveney. This information sheet provides guidance about the safe use of thickeners for dysphagia.

- A) Gum-based thickeners are safer and more palatable due to their clarity, stability, and consistency over a range of temperatures.
- B) The preferred gum-based thickener for Adult Community Speech and Language services is Nutilis Clear (Nutricia). In our 3 hospitals (JPUH, QEHL, NNUH), Thick & Easy Clear (Fresenius Kabi) is used, therefore there is a mixture of Thick & Easy Clear and Nutilis Clear being used in primary care.
- C) *Although gum-based thickeners are usually preferred, starch-based thickeners may still be requested by Speech and Language Therapists (SALT or SLT) for some patients with learning disabilities, paediatrics and for personal preference.*
- D) **Please note:** In children under 3 years of age, there is a limited range of suitable thickeners due to their high sodium content. Instant Carobel is ACBS listed for the management of reflux and regurgitation, rather than dysphagia. Instant Carobel may be suggested by the paediatric SALT as there is no alternative thickener currently available to modify liquid texture in the under-3 age group. The manufacturer of Instant Carobel does not provide guidance on IDDSI levels, therefore prescribing directions should include number of scoops per millilitres of fluid only (no IDDSI level).
- E) Thickeners should not be initiated or changed in general practice without a SALT assessment and advice. Due to safety concerns around IDDSI compliance, preparation, and incorrect dosing, ensure the thickener prescribed is exactly as recommended by SALT e.g. Nutilis **Clear** or Thick & Easy **Clear** (gum-based).

Please note: Although the names are similar, *Nutilis Powder* and *Thick & Easy Original* are different products (starch-based).
- F) For patient safety, please ensure clear directions are given when prescribing thickeners, (as detailed by SALT) including:
 - a) The IDDSI level recommended by SALT.
 - b) The number of scoops per 200ml of fluid (and type of fluids where applicable e.g. all drinks / hot drinks only / cold drinks only).

This information can be obtained from SALT correspondence. Exception: Instant Carobel in children under 3 as per (D) above.

Example directions for use on SystmOne or EMIS (add to 'dose' on repeat template):

2021 **Nutilis Clear powder (Nutricia Ltd)**
525 gram - Add 2 scoops per 200ml to all drinks (IDDSI level 2)

Please see below for guidance on the amounts to prescribe per 28-day issue: **Please note this is a guide only and some patients may require more product.**

Aim for 1 - 1.5L fluid per day	Recommended dose per IDDSI Level	Calculated requirements	Tins to prescribe per 28-day issue
Nutilis Clear (Nutricia) Gum-based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IDDSI compliant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACBS approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tin size: 175g 1.25g per level scoop 140 scoops per tin £10.13 per tin 7.2p per scoop (As of Nov 2024)	Level 1: Slightly thick 1 scoop per 200ml	140 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 28 days for 1L 1 tin = 19 days for 1.5L	2 tins for 1.5L 350g total
	Level 2: Mildly thick 2 scoops per 200ml	70 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 14 days for 1L 1 tin = 9.3 days for 1.5L	3 tins for 1.5L 525g total
	Level 3: Moderately thick 3 scoops per 200ml	47 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 9.4 days for 1L 1 tin = 6.3 days for 1.5L	5 tins for 1.5L 875g total
	Level 4: Extremely thick 7 scoops per 200ml	20 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 4 days for 1L 1 tin = 2.7 days for 1.5L	10 tins for 1.5L 1750g total
Thick & Easy Clear (Fresenius Kabi) Gum-based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IDDSI compliant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACBS approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tin size: 126g tin 1.4g per level scoop 90 scoops per tin £6.50 per tin 7.2p per scoop (As of Nov 2024)	Level 1: Slightly thick 1 scoop per 200ml	90 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 18 days for 1L 1 tin = 12 days for 1.5L	3 tins for 1.5L 378g total
	Level 2: Mildly thick 2 scoops per 200ml	45 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 9 days for 1L 1 tin = 6 days for 1.5L	5 tins for 1.5L 630g total
	Level 3: Moderately thick 3 scoops per 200ml	30 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 6 days for 1L 1 tin = 4 days for 1.5L	7 tins for 1.5L 882g total
	Level 4: Extremely thick 6 scoops per 200ml	15 x 200ml drinks per tin 1 tin = 3 days for 1L 1 tin = 2 days for 1.5L	14 tins for 1.5L 1764g total

If you are concerned about a patient's swallow, please make a referral to SALT. If it is **urgent** and unsafe to wait, contact the appropriate SALT Service for advice (contact info below).

Please note: community services are not emergency services, therefore consider admission to hospital if the need is urgent.

Oral nutritional supplements (ONS)

Unless specifically advised by a Speech and Language Therapist, ONS should not be thickened as this may lead to unsafe consistencies. Pre-thickened ONS are available for all IDDSI levels, these products must be served at room temperature to maintain the correct viscosity.

Please contact your local community dietetic team direct or email the NHS Norfolk & Waveney ICB Medicines Optimisation Dietetic Team (nwicb.dieteticqueries@nhs.net) if you have a query about ONS for a patient with dysphagia.

Speech and Language Therapy teams contact details

Great Yarmouth and Waveney Speech and Language Therapy (Adult)	
Routine	Referrals / enquiries: ACCESS@ecchcic.nhs.uk (mark FAO: Community SALT Team)
Urgent enquiries	East Coast Community Access Tel: 01493 809977, please state query is regarding urgent dysphagia advice for an adult, providing patient details and full details of concerns
Central Norfolk Community Speech and Language (Adult)	
Routine	Referrals / enquiries: centralbooking@nchc.nhs.uk (mark FAO: Community SALT Team) Tick the "urgent" box on the referral form if applicable
Urgent enquiries / advice	Tel: 01603 216021, please state query is regarding urgent dysphagia advice for an adult, providing full details of concerns and patient details. Please note: referrals cannot be made by telephone and must be emailed as above (title URGENT FAO Community SALT Team if required)
West Norfolk Community Speech and Language Therapy (Adult)	
Routine and urgent	Neuro and non-Neuro patients (except post-stroke) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals / enquiries: community.neuro@nchc.nhs.uk (marked FAO SLT and marked URGENT if required) • General enquiries: 01553 668599 (answerphone messages are passed to a clinician for response) Community SLT Stroke Service (team based at QEHKL) For community-based post-stroke patients registered to a GP Practice in King's Lynn or West Norfolk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals / enquiries: gehkl-tr.strokeslt@nhs.net • General enquiries: 01553 613471
Norfolk Learning Disabilities Service	
Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North: cldt-north@nchc.nhs.uk or tel: 01263 676111 • West: cldt-west@nchc.nhs.uk or tel: 01553 666680 • South: cldt-south@nchc.nhs.uk or tel: 01953 450800 • Norwich: cldt-city@nchc.nhs.uk or tel: 01603 638520 • East: cldt-gy@nchc.nhs.uk or tel: 01493 448400
Urgent:	SLTadultlearningdisability@nchc.nhs.uk and cc the routine e-mail above

Waveney Learning Disabilities Service	
Urgent and Routine	<p>General enquiries only (Adults/Older Persons): Tel. 01502 535020 or email: AdminLDAdultWaveney@nsft.nhs.uk</p> <p>Referrals for adults 25+ (please mark if Urgent: Adult/Older Persons): AATGYWAdultReferrals@nsft.nhs.uk</p> <p>Referrals for service users under 25 (CAMHS/Youth): cfyreferralsgyw@nsft.nhs.uk</p>
Norfolk and Waveney Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Service (Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust via Just One Norfolk)	
Routine	<p>Just One Number 0300 300 0123 Opening hours: Monday - Friday 8am-6pm and Saturday 9am-1pm.</p>
Urgent	<p>Just One Number 0300 300 0123 If query not resolved by Just One Number within a reasonable time, email: ccs.nandw-salt-ion@nhs.net (for use by Healthcare Professionals only)</p> <p>Add subject 'Urgent feeding/swallowing query'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include patient name, DOB, NHS number <p>Members of the public should contact the team via website only: www.JustOneNorfolk.nhs.uk</p>