

Thickening Powders for Dysphagia Prescribing Guide

Thickening powders are requested by Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) to assist when a patient has swallowing difficulties (dysphagia).

- **Thick & Easy Clear** is the recommended first-line product
- **Thick & Easy Original** is second-line

The two products are not interchangeable.

Both thickeners became compliant with the new International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) descriptors from April 1 2019. For further information see <https://iddsi.org/>

	Product	Type	Presentation
First-line	Thick & Easy Clear	Gum based	126g tin
Second-line	Thick & Easy Original	Starch-based	225g tin

First-line: Thick & Easy Clear

Thick & Easy **Clear** is the recommended **first-line** thickener in Cornwall across **acute and community settings**.



Features:

- **Gum based** thickener
- **Advantages:** amylase resistance, increased stability, increased palatability
- **Disadvantages:** higher sodium content (contact Dietitian for patients with kidney disease)
- Available in 126g tins
- Approximate number of 200ml, Level 1 drinks per tin: 90
- Sachets are available but should only be prescribed on request by a SLT with evidence of individual need, as they are less cost-effective.

Cost comparison

Thick & Easy Clear is more cost-effective due to less powder being required to achieve levels 1, 2 and 3. Very few individuals are recommended level 4 fluids.

Example for individual requiring Level 1, drinking 2000ml/day*

*Please note a different number of tins will be required depending on each individual's recommended IDDSI level and daily fluid intake

Thickener	Cost per tin	Number of 200ml, Level 1 drinks/ tin	Tins/ month	Cost/month
Thick & Easy Clear	£6.50	90	3 tins	£19.50
Thick & Easy Original	£5.57	30	9 tins	£50.13

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Thick & Easy Clear is a xanthan gum-based thickening powder designed to maintain the normal appearance of fluids, which may improve patient compliance and hydration. It has amylase resistant features in order to help ensure a safer swallow by maintaining the correct consistency in the mouth.



The table below can help determine the amount of Thick & Easy Clear required per month, depending on the daily fluid intake and the fluid consistency the patient requires. Fluid requirements and intake should be determined by a clinician, dietitian or SLT.

The levels below correspond to the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) level. If a patient's recommendations pre-date March 2019, these are likely to correspond to the National Descriptors for Texture Modification. In these instances, please refer to the stages in brackets.

1 scoop per 200mls - Level 1 SLIGHTLY THICK (formerly naturally thick)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	5	140	2
1500ml	7.5	210	2.5
2000ml	10	280	3
2500ml	12.5	350	4

2 scoops per 200mls - Level 2 MILDLY THICK (formerly Stage 1)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	10	280	3
1500ml	15	420	5
2000ml	20	560	6
2500ml	25	700	8

3 scoops per 200mls - Level 3 MODERATELY THICK (formerly Stage 2)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	15	420	5
1500ml	22.5	630	7
2000ml	30	840	9.5
2500ml	37.5	1050	12

6 scoops per 200mls - Level 4 EXTREMELY THICK (formerly Stage 3)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	30	840	9.5
1500ml	45	1260	14
2000ml	60	1680	19
2500ml	75	2100	23.3

1 month = 28 days, 1 tin = 126g 1 scoop = 1.4g

Second-line: Thick & Easy Original

Thick & Easy Original should **only** be prescribed if Thick & Easy Clear is not suitable or if requested by a speech and language therapist.


Features:

- **Starch-based** thickener
- **Advantages:** low in sodium, easy to use
- **Disadvantages:** poor stability over time, not amylase resistant
- Available as a 225g tin
- Approximate number of 200 ml, Level 1 drinks per tin: 30





The table below is a guide on the amount of Thick & Easy Original required per month, depending on daily fluid intake and the fluid consistency the patient requires. Fluid requirements and intake should be determined by a clinician, dietitian or SLT.

The levels below correspond to the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) level. If an individual's recommendations pre-date March 2019, these are likely to correspond to the National Descriptors for Texture Modification. In these instances, please refer to the stages in brackets. The quantity of Thick & Easy Original required may vary slightly depending on the type, temperature or thickness of the liquid.

5 scoop per 200mls - Level  SLIGHTLY THICK (formerly naturally thick)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	25	700	5
1500ml	37.5	1050	7
2000ml	50	1400	9
2500ml	62.5	1750	12

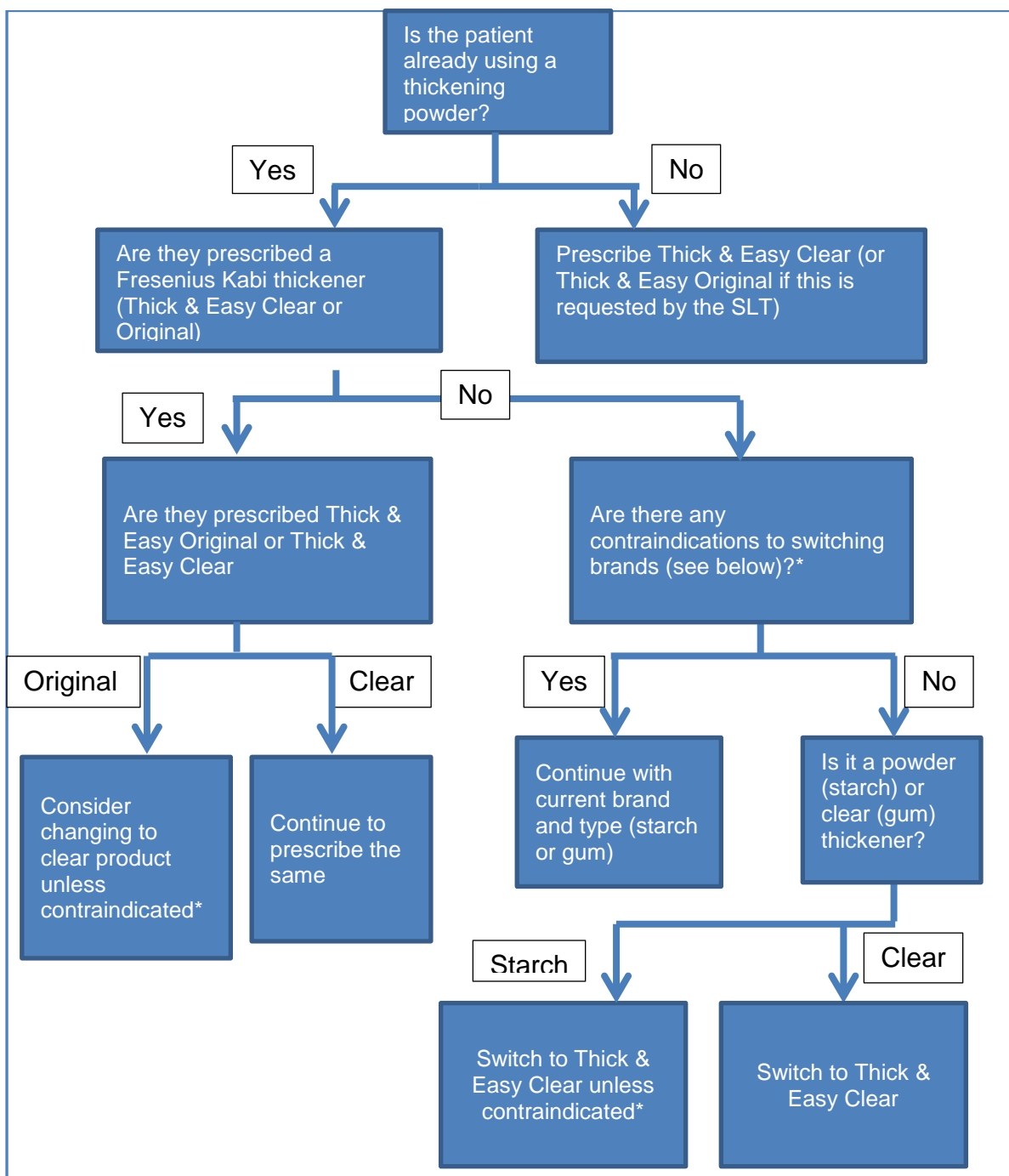
6 scoops per 200mls - Level  MILDLY THICK (formerly Stage 1)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	30	840	6
1500ml	45	1260	8
2000ml	60	1680	11
2500ml	75	2100	14

7 scoops per 200mls - Level  MODERATELY THICK (formerly Stage 2)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	35	980	7
1500ml	52.5	1470	10
2000ml	70	1960	13
2500ml	87.5	2450	16

8 scoops per 200mls - Level  EXTREMELY THICK (formerly Stage 3)			
Daily fluid intake	Scoops per day	Scoops per month	Tins per month
1000ml	40	1120	8
1500ml	60	1680	11
2000ml	80	2240	15
2500ml	100	2800	19

1 month = 28 days, 1 tin = 225g, 1 scoop = 1.5g

Guidelines for Prescribers – Prescribing FlowChart



*Contraindications to switching brands of thickening powder

- Patient has a medical condition which prohibits moderate-high sodium intake – starch thickeners should be prescribed in these cases.
- Patient or carer has cognitive problems, language comprehension problems or learning disabilities and is unlikely to cope with new instructions re quantities/mixing product.
- Patient is long term user of a product and is no longer under the care of speech and language therapy.
- Contact SLT on sltadultcontacts@nhs.net or 07979800514 or 01579 373590 if you have any queries.