

Community Guidelines for Prescribing Thickeners for Children

Thickener and pre thickened products should only be prescribed for infants, children and adolescents on the recommendation of, and under the guidance of a paediatric Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) for swallowing difficulties, or in line with [NICE CKS](#) recommendations for management of reflux.

Requests for prescription of thickener products for swallowing difficulties should include the IDDSI level required for fluids, this must be included on the prescription directions.

Due to differing product characteristics and prescription indications, the specific product requested by the specialist should be prescribed, products prescribed for infants, children and adolescents should not be included in product switching or swaps.

Thickener	Age	Indication	Notes
Infant gum thickener			
Carobel Instant	Birth to 3	Reflux or vomiting Dysphagia	Carobel Instant should be used in line with NICE CKS for management of gastro-oesophageal reflux in children . (Note - Gaviscon infant cannot be used alongside Carobel, other pre-thickened infant formula or with thickener products to prevent over thickening of stomach contents) Carobel Instant should only be initiated for children with dysphagia after assessment by a specialist speech and language therapist.
Gum based thickeners			
Nutilis Clear Resource ThickenUp Clear	3+*	Thickening of food and fluids in dysphagia	Prescribe in line with patient specific advice from SLT (*SLT from the Royal Brompton may request Resource ThickenUp Clear for patients aged 2 and over in line with their local guidance)
Starch based thickeners			
Thick & Easy Original Thixo-D Original	3+ 1+	Thickening of food and fluids in dysphagia	Use only on advice from SLT for patients who are unable to tolerate a gum-based thickener, or patients aged 1-3 (Thixo-D only) There is a known interaction between starch based thickeners and polyethylene glycol (PEG) laxatives which may increase aspiration risk, mixing starch based thickener and PEG laxative should be avoided.
Thixo-D cal free	1+	Thickening of food and fluids in dysphagia	Thixo-D Cal free is the only carbohydrate free thickener. This may be requested in exceptional circumstances for infants and children following a ketogenic diet

Thickener prescription may be required long term in children with dysphagia. Children should be under the ongoing supervision of a Speech and Language Therapist. Quantities of thickener prescribed may need to increase as children grow and require more fluids. Following a [national patient safety alert](#) parents/carers must be informed to keep tins of thickener out of reach and ensure thickener products are not ingested dry.

Pre-thickened infant formulas are part of the [management guidelines](#) for gastro-oesophageal reflux disease in primary care. These products are a similar price to standard infant formula, and parents/carers should be informed that these products should be purchased not prescribed. Pre-thickened and anti-reflux formulae are not suitable for children with swallowing difficulties.

Note: thickeners are not licensed for mixing with medications (this is an off-label use of the medication), so decisions on medication administration should be on an individual patient basis and clearly documented (e.g., in prescription directions). Specialist Pharmacy Service provide resources including, [thickening liquid medicines](#) and [giving medicines safely with food or thickened fluid](#).