**Dysphagia and Thickened Liquid Tip Sheet**

* Prescribed by a health professional
* Used for people with swallowing problems to prevent choking or food/liquid from going into the lungs

**There are 3 levels of the dysphagia diet**:

**The Level 3 diet** is most like a regular diet. However, foods may need to be chopped, ground, shredded and cooked to make them easier to chew and swallow. Hard, crunchy or sticky foods need to be avoided.

**The Level 2 diet** needs to have soft, moist food that forms a bolus or a ball. Meats have to be ground or chopped and mixed with sauce or gravy for easier swallowing. Foods in large chunks or too hard to be chewed thoroughly should be avoided.

**The Level 1 diet** is the most modified. All foods need to be blended or pureed to the consistency of mashed potatoes and free of lumps in order to be swallowed safely. People on the Level 1 diet need to be supervised while eating and their beverages thickened.

**Liquid thicknesses**

**Thin liquids** are just regular liquids, such as water, milk, juice, coffee, tea or carbonated beverages. Other foods that you may not think of as thin liquids are ice creams, sherbet, sorbet or gelatin because they turn into thin liquids at room temperature. Broth based soups also count as thin liquids.

**Nectar-thick liquid** is the next level of thickness. Foods that are nectar thick are maple syrup, egg nog, tomato and cream based soups.

**Honey-thick liquid** has the thickness of honey. To get this consistency, thickeners have to be added. Remember, thicker liquids give a person with dysphagia more time to control the liquid in their mouth so it doesn’t go into their lungs.

**Pudding or spoon thick liquid** really isn’t a liquid at all, but has the thickness of pudding.

Thickeners must be added to create nectar-thick, honey-thick and pudding-thick liquid thickness. Follow the directions carefully on the thickener product to make each different thickness correctly.