

## Formulary Update Chapter 9: Thickening agents 'thickeners'

### Summary Sheet July 2021

#### What is the update?

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There has been an update under Chapter 9 of the Sheffield CCG Formulary to acknowledge [Nutilis® Clear](#) as first-line formulary choice of thickening agent in Sheffield.

#### What is the reason for this change?

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Nutilis® Clear is one of a new generation of gum-based thickeners. The choice to establish it as first-line has been made for several reasons.

- The choice now aligns primary care with secondary care where Sheffield Teaching Hospitals use Nutilis® Clear (ensuring continuity of care).
- Gum-based thickeners are more palatable, have improved stability (not over thickening with time) and are unaffected by amylase in saliva, which can cause drinks to thin and become an aspiration risk.
- A smaller amount of product is needed to achieve the same consistency vs traditional starch-based thickeners.
- Nutilis® Clear is the most cost-effective product for the majority\* of patients who require a thickening agent.
- Gum-based thickeners are less likely to interact with some medicines in comparison to starch-based thickeners. See [MHRA Alert](#) on Polyethylene glycol (PEG) laxatives and starch-based thickeners.

#### Are Nutilis® Powder and Nutilis® Clear the same product?

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No. Nutilis® Powder (300g) is a starch-based product. Ensure you select the 'Clear' (175g) version on your respective prescribing systems.

#### My patients are prescribed other thickeners what do I need to do?

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There is no immediate action to take for patients using other thickeners e.g. Thick and Easy. Nutilis® Clear can be discussed as an option at the next medication review as appropriate. Where patients are prescribed sachets or pre-thickened drinks consider if these are still indicated due to cost implications.

#### Are there any other considerations to be aware of?

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The mixing instructions between thickeners differ. If any patients are switched it is crucial that they use the scoop supplied with the new product to achieve the consistency specified by their Speech & Language Therapist / dysphagia trained professional. Mixing instructions can be found on the side of each product.

#### Can I supply Nutilis® Clear as bulk to my care home?

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Yes. There is no reason Nutilis® Clear cannot be issued as bulk supply to care homes. Please refer to [Sheffield CCG prescribing guidance on bulk supply](#). We are advising prescribers to stop issuing catering packs of Thick and Easy (4540g packs only) on safety grounds. These large packs are difficult to store and do not come with scoops for staff to achieve the correct IDDSI levels. Where stopped please consider Nutilis® Clear as a replacement. Support with this can be obtained by emailing [sheffieldccg.sheffieldmedicinesincarehomes@nhs.net](mailto:sheffieldccg.sheffieldmedicinesincarehomes@nhs.net).

### How many tins do I prescribe?

Suggested on-going minimum quantities per month for Nutilis® Clear

Fluid intake (ml) per day	Nutilis® Clear 175g tin		
	1000ml	1500ml	2000ml
IDDSI Level 1 (Slightly thick)	1	2	2
IDDSI Level 2 (Mildly thick)	2	3	4
IDDSI Level 3 (Moderately thick)	3	5	6
IDDSI Level 4 (Extremely thick) *	7	11	14

\* At IDDSI Level 4 the consistency is such that a starch-based product becomes more palatable and cost-effective.

Stephen Booth  
 Senior Lead Pharmacy Technician (Care Homes), NHS Sheffield CCG  
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