

Dispensing and Reimbursement of Food Thickening Vouchers by Community Pharmacy in:

NHS North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board - County Durham Place and Tees Valley Place (Darlington)

Introduction

Dysphagia (swallowing problems) occurs in all care settings and although the true incidence and prevalence are unknown, it is estimated the condition can occur in up to 30% of people aged over 65 years of age. Stroke, neurodegenerative diseases and learning disabilities can be the cause of some cases of dysphagia, and may also result in cognitive or intellectual impairment, as well as visual impairment.

The modification of liquid thickness and food texture is common practice in dysphagia management to avoid aspiration of material into the airway whilst maintaining adequate hydration and nutrition. Thickening agents are available in a range of preparations, the most common being a powdered form, supplied in tubs and commonly kept in a place that is accessible such as at the bedside.

NHS England issued a patient safety alert in February 2015 to raise awareness of the need for proper storage and management of food thickening powder following patient safety incidents where harm has been caused by the accidental swallowing of the powder when it had not been properly stored out of reach.

All relevant staff need to be aware of potential risks to patient safety. Appropriate storage and administration of thickening powder needs to be embedded within the wider context of protocols, bedside documentation, training programmes and access to expert advice required to safely manage all aspects of the care of individuals with dysphagia. Individualised risk assessment and care planning is required to ensure that vulnerable people are identified and protected. Community pharmacists have a responsibility to counsel patients appropriately when dispensing food thickening vouchers as part of the scheme to ensure patients and carers are aware of the importance of the correct use and storage of these products.

A rapid response swallowing service is in place across County Durham and Darlington, where Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) attend patients in the community recommending a thickener, where appropriate, to prevent aspiration and admissions with chest infections.

1. Service Description

- 1.1 This service is available to patients in the community assessed by CDDFT Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) as requiring a food thickener to prevent aspiration and admissions for chest infections.
- 1.2 For this service to be successful patients require immediate access to food thickening products via a voucher through community pharmacies.

- 1.2.1 Speech and Language Therapy practitioners will assess the patient. If food thickening is required, a voucher will be completed by the practitioner.
 - 1.2.2 The patient or patient's representative will present the Food Thickening Voucher at a participating community pharmacy in the County Durham and Darlington.
 - 1.2.3 The community pharmacy will supply the product requested on the voucher form according to the instructions on the voucher.
 - 1.2.4 The community pharmacy will maintain electronic patient records of supply and retain the voucher for audit at the dispensing pharmacy
 - 1.2.5 The community pharmacy will complete the Food Thickening Claim Form and submit monthly by the 5th of the month for payment to the NECS Finance Team.
- 1.3 The pharmacy will provide information and advice to the user, carer and clinician. They may also refer to specialist centres, support groups or other health and social care professionals where appropriate.

2. Aims and Intended Service Outcomes

- 2.1 To improve access for people to food thickening products when they are required by ensuring prompt access and continuity of supply.
- 2.2 To support people, carers and clinicians by providing them with up to date information and advice, and referral where appropriate.

3. Service Outline

- 3.1 The pharmacy contractor has a duty to ensure that pharmacists and staff involved in the provision of the service have relevant knowledge and are appropriately trained in the operation of the service.
- 3.2 The pharmacy should maintain appropriate records to ensure effective on going service delivery and audit.
- 3.3 The pharmacy contractor has a duty to ensure that pharmacists and staff involved in the provision of the service are aware of and operate within local protocols.
- 3.4 The ICB will cascade information via LPC newsletters regarding the service development and any requirements for updating the knowledge of pharmacy staff.
- 3.5 The ICB will reimburse the cost of dispensing the product requested on the voucher, plus a fee for the dispensing process.
- 3.6 Claims must be submitted using the template in appendix 2.

Appendix 1 – Food Thickening Voucher

FOOD/FLUID THICKENING VOUCHER

**Patients should take this voucher to a Community Pharmacy in NHS NENC
ICB - County Durham and Darlington for the voucher to be dispensed**

Patient Name		GP	
Address		Address	
NHS number			
Date of birth	/ / /		
<p>Please supply:- x 175g Tin of Nuttilis Clear By Nutricia</p> <p>Instructions:</p>			

Voucher authorisation by:

Speech and Language Therapist Name	
Signature	
Qualification	
Date	
Contact Details	

**Pharmacy
Stamp**

PPA No: _____

**Pharmacist
Signature**

**Pharmacist
Name**
Date

 / / /

****please ensure the patient completes the declaration on the reverse of this form****

TO THE PATIENT

Please complete this section:

- I have been supplied the medication as written on the front of this prescription form and paid £..... Prescription fee.
- I have been supplied, without charge, the medication as written on the front of this prescription form

A		Is under 16 years of age
B		Is 16, 17 or 18 and in full time education
C		Is 60 years of age or over
D		Has a current maternity exemption certificate
E		Has a medical exemption certificate
F		Has a current prescription pre-payment certificate
G		Has a War/MoD exemption certification number _____ please state
H		*Gets Income Support (give details of person receiving benefit)
M		*Is entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate
S		*has a partner who receives Pension Credit guarantee credit
K		*Gets Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance
L		Is named on current HC2 charges certificate

Name (please print)

Date of birth

*print the name of the person (either you or your partner) who receive IS, JSA or Tax Credit

Patient's signature

Date.....

Appendix 2: COMMUNITY PHARMACY FOOD THICKENING VOUCHER REIMBURSEMENT FORM (FT001)

Please return via email to NECS Finance team at the following address:-

necsu.minorailments@nhs.net

Name of Pharmacy:	
Address of Pharmacy	
Quantity and Cost of Food Thickening Product Supplied	<input type="checkbox"/> x 175g Tin Nutilis Clear by Nutricia = £
Dispensing Fees (£0.90)	<input type="checkbox"/> x £0.90 =
Prescription Fees Collected (Please deduct this from the total amount claimed)	£.....
Pharmacist's Signature	
Pharmacist's Name (please print clearly)	
Date	

Total Claimed £.....
