

**Criteria-for-Use Checklist: Thickening Agents for Outpatients**  
VHA Pharmacy Benefits Management Strategic Healthcare Group and Medical Advisory Panel in  
Cooperation with Nutrition and Dietary Services

*The following criteria-for-use are based on current medical evidence, existing clinical practice guidelines and expert opinion from clinicians. The content of the document is dynamic and will be revised as new clinical data becomes available. The purpose of this document is to assist practitioners in clinical decision-making, to standardize and improve the quality of patient care, and to promote cost-effective drug prescribing. The clinician should utilize this guidance and interpret it in the clinical context of the individual patient situation.*

Please see Guidance for Medication Assessment in Patients with Swallowing (Dysphagia) and Feeding Disorders for additional information.

<http://vaww.pbm.va.gov/clinicians/ClinicalGuidanceForMedicationAssessmentInDysphagia.pdf>

Prior to receiving a thickening agent, patient must meet the following:

- Have had an evaluation by Speech-Language Pathology within the past 12 months indicating the need for thickened liquids and a diagnosis of dysphagia  
AND
- Have an order or diet prescription from a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, physician assistant or other “privileged” clinician in the medical record or sent electronically, using terminology and diets approved in the medical center diet and / or nutrition manual.
  - Privileged clinician = Local facility policy will identify which disciplines are “privileged”.

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