Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects on a patient’s swallowing of diluting E-Z-EM’s Varibar Thin liquid barium product (which is often used in videofluoroscopic swallow studies) to achieve a consistency closer to water. Forty patients 18 years and older participated in this study. Their varied medical diagnoses included stroke, pneumonia, TBI, and cancer; as well as diagnoses not usually associated with dysphagia such as abdominal pain and rhabdo mylosis. To screen for aspiration, E-Z-EM’s Varibar Thin liquid was presented to patients to swallow as 2cc, 5cc, cup and straw drinking trials. If no aspiration occurred, the patient was given the Varibar Thin liquid diluted by 50% using water (referred to as Ultrathin) to swallow in the same amounts. Then the occurrence of patients’ aspiration with the Ultrathin liquid was compared to the occurrence of their aspiration when they swallowed the Varibar Thin liquid. Fifty percent of patients aspirated on the Ultrathin liquid, but not on the Varibar Thin liquid, across at least one of the test conditions. From these results, we suggest that although E-Z-EM Varibar Thin liquid may have a low viscosity range, it still may not be thin ‘enough’ to identify all patients who aspirate, or are at risk for aspiration, on thin liquids.

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