

# **Slõ**® **FAQ's**



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## Frequently Asked Questions about Slõ Drinks

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## **Who is the Slõ Drinks Company?**

Started in 2005, we specialize in providing easy ways for people to provide safe, palatable thickened drinks.

## **What are Slõ Drinks?**

Those with living with dysphagia need drinks that flow slowly.

Consequently, to make it easy for them and their carers to prepare drinks that flow slowly and at just at the right speed so they can be swallowed safely, we deposit the right amount of thickener in our sachets and products to make drinks at IDDSI Levels 1, 2 & 3.

As a result, for the first time experienced **and novice** carers throughout the patients care pathway can ensure all the drinks dysphagia patients need for hydration, nutrition, to relax with and to take medication; are safe and comfortable to swallow.

To maintain essential hydration levels they simply mix a Slõ Cold Drink sachet into a glass of juice, water or iced tea; a Slõ Hot Drink sachet into a cup of tea or coffee.

Supplement nutritional intake with a Slõ Milkshake+ sachet. Just mix with whole milk to make a high protein, high calorie shake full of 25 vitamins and minerals.

Add a Slõ Wine, Cider or Beer sachet to a favourite alcoholic drink and...relax.

Pill-Eze is a ready to use Slõ Drink. It makes pills easy to swallow. Suitable for use with medicinal, supplement and laxative pills they all they glide down smoothly, don't get stuck and its sweet cherry flavour hides the bad taste of a pill.

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## **What is the difference between making a Slõ Drinks and a thickened drink with Thick and Easy and Resource etc.?**

As you've probably have seen, different drinks affect the effectiveness of thickeners. Consequently, you can't use the same thickener for all drinks or add the same sized scoop of thickener to different drinks and expect to achieve the same consistency.

To overcome this, we use specific thickeners for different drinks.

Firstly, we make sure the thickener is tasteless. It must disperse easily, maintain its consistency over time and be amylase resistant.

Then, we calculate the quantity of thickener required per ml of a particular drink to make it flow as slowly as our other drinks.

Finally, we decide whether it's better to add our thickener to the drink or vice versa. This has a massive impact on thickeners. ...

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As a result, all anyone has to do to make a Slō Drink is mix it with the specified amount of fluid.

It will look like and ordinary drink and taste like one, it just flows slowly and is safer to swallow.

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**Diets. Are Slō Drinks the sachets suitable for ...**

**Vegetarians:** Yes

**Vegans:** No

**A Halal\* Diet:** Yes

**A Kosher\* Diet:** Yes

Please note they are not certified, but the ingredients are suitable.

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**Are they suitable for diabetics?**

Yes – with the exception of the Slō Milkshakes+, but it depends on the patient. Diabetics with stable blood sugars do drink them.

Dietitians that use them, either serve them with foods or adjust their medication because they think it's better to hydrate them orally.

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**How much water does the patient actually obtain?**

As far as we know, only 3-5% of the water is absorbed by our thickeners.

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**Do they match the IDDSI Levels?**

Yes.

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**Are the consistencies certified?**

There is no certification for consistency only recommended flow rates provided by the IDDSI. All Slō Drinks match their flow rates.

[www.iddsi.org](http://www.iddsi.org)

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## **They aren't the same consistency as my drinks?**

Everyone has his or her own perception of what is the right consistency when adding thickener from a tin

Consequently, Slō Drinks are guaranteed to always be a specific consistency and match the IDDSI flow rates.

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## **How do I know they will always meet a prescribed consistency?**

Our thickener is deposited in our products by machine and is accurate +/- 0.2 of a gram. That's about enough to cover your small fingernail and far more accurate than the human eye.

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## **Do they thin out, separate or thicken up?**

No.

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## **Are they resistant to saliva amylase?**

Yes.

We've tried them with 3 tablespoons of saliva from people around the office and they are fine.

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## **Why are yours resistant to saliva amylase?**

It's due to the formulation of our thickeners.

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## **Do you provide Fortified Drinks?**

Slō Milkshakes+ are our 1<sup>st</sup> fortified drinks. Made with full fat milk they are a high protein, high calorie supplement that provide a mix of 25 essential vitamins and minerals.

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## **Can I add crushed medication to Slō Drinks?**

You would have to check with the patient's doctor. Tablet medication shouldn't be crushed. It's contraindicated and doesn't guarantee that the medication will be delivered correctly and released as required.

We would therefore recommend using Pill-Eze.

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## **Can I add medication in oral suspension to a Slō Drink?**

You have to check with a patient's Doctor. We would not recommend it. Liquid medications do not have a flow rating and diluting it in a drink will prevent the person have the recommended dose.

Pill-Eze can be used with solid dose alternatives.

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## **Do you provide your own thickener in tins?**

No. We feel that would be a backward step and call it scoop-and-hope.

Patients and their carers struggle to measure the right amount of thickener, in relation to the right volume of water/ fluid, so there is no way to guarantee a drink will meet a prescribed consistency.

It also degrades. Thickener is sensitive to water and is therefore be affected by the moisture in the air. When you open a new tin, the thickener will work much better than the thickener in a tin which has been opened and used.

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## **Why are Slō Drinks so smooth?**

There are a few reasons:

We use our own thickeners which dissolve in water very quickly and we specify whether you should add the drink to the thickener or vice versa. This has a massive effect on a thickener's thickening ability.

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## **Can you add more water or not as much?**

Yes, but it will adjust the consistency.

So, if you want to fine tune the consistency for your patient, you must decide how little or how much you want to add **before** starting the drink.

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## **Can you add juice supplements?**

No. They curdle.

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## **Slō Drinks are more expensive than other thickening powders**

No. Slō Drinks are far more cost effective to use:

- They always meet the flow rate/ consistency prescribed and not thrown away.
- Patients and carers will never over thicken a drink.
- They are quick and easy to make so your patients can have more drinks, more often.
- They look and taste like “ordinary” drinks – so your patients will find them easier to drink.
- Provide a more hygienic, safe way to make a drink

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## **What's the shelf life?**

Anything from 1 to 16 months.

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## **Who is using them?**

They are used in Hospitals, the Community and bought by patients direct via our online shop and Slō Drinkers Club.

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## **Patient confidentiality**

We do not keep patients address details. Only their name so we can trace when a therapist has asked for samples.

We do not share or sell our records and we follow the guidelines from the Information Commissioners Office on keeping contact details.

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## **How quickly do you deliver?**

Normally within 48 hours. Mon to Friday.

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## How do we obtain them on prescription?

### Hospitals Clinicians:

#### **Direct from us:**

Any department can order. Our clients use Ward budgets, Catering and Pharmacy.

You simply phone 03452 222 205 or email [sales@slodrinks.com](mailto:sales@slodrinks.com), with an official order number and they will arrive 48 hours later.

#### **NHS Supply Chain**

You can order them through your Blue Diamond on line system.

### Community Clinicians:

Complete a prescription request and send it to your patients GP.

They will write a prescription for your patients to take to their Pharmacy who will order from us or their Wholesaler and 48 hours later, their drinks will arrive.

If you or your patients have any problems obtaining them, just call us and we will speak to the Pharmacist or GP for you.

You can download a prescription request from [www.slodrinks.com/clinicians-library/](http://www.slodrinks.com/clinicians-library/)

### Patients and Nursing Homes:

With your appointed Clinician complete a prescription request form and take it to your GP

They will give you a prescription for your Pharmacy who will order from us or their Wholesaler and 48 hours later, your drinks will arrive.

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## Can patients buy them direct?

Yes, via our online shop [www.slodrinks.com/shop](http://www.slodrinks.com/shop)

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**I don't think I can send my patient's address for a sample because of patient confidentiality.**

We are members of the UK's Data Protection Agency.

We do not pass data on. We do not keep patients address details on our system only their name.

You can complete their details on our encrypted secure on line form. Just go to [www.slodrinks.com](http://www.slodrinks.com), click the HCP button at the top of the page. That takes you to the Clinicians Library and click the Sample button to open a secure encrypted on-line form

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**Why do you call them Slō Drinks?**

People with dysphagia need drinks that flow slowly.

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**Why is there a squiggle over the O?**

Just to make the logo distinctive.

It doesn't affect the way you say it or mean Slō Drinks from Sweden!

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**Why haven't your competitors made them?**

You would have to ask them.

But we think when they originally formulated thickening powders dysphagia as a condition was largely unrecognized and undiagnosed.

Consequently, it didn't warrant any major development.

However, since then awareness about dysphagia and its impact on patient's rehabilitation has grown dramatically.

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**Do you do training sessions for Nursing Homes**

Not at the moment.

All Slō Drinks are easy to use and therefore extensive training sessions are not required.

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**Are Slō Drinks on our Trusts' Formulary?**

I'm not sure; you would have to ask your Medicines Management Team.  
As they are ACBS approved, you will be able to prescribe them.

They only way you couldn't prescribe, was if they were put on a "Prescribing Black List." But, you

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can still ask the GP to prescribe them.

Slō Drinks are not on these lists.

If you want them on your Trusts Formulary, you have to make the request. Unfortunately, we can't do it. It has to come from Clinicians in the PCT.

You just call your Medicines Management Team, tell them you want Slō Drinks to be considered and they will go through a form with you.

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### **Why do you specify a quantity of fluid**

The problem with other thickeners is the manufactures do not say how much fluid you should add to each drink. As a result, consistencies vary increasing the likelihood of aspiration.

Specifying a fluid amount reduces this risk.

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### **How did the company start?**

Slō Drinks started in 2005 because the founder of Slō Drinks had a chance conversation with a Speech and Language Therapist. Walking out of a puree tasting he asked her, "Is there anything else your dysphagia patients would like?" She replied "A pleasant thickened drink."

Refer to the Website [www.slodrinks.com/about](http://www.slodrinks.com/about) for the Slō Story up to the present day

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### **Slō Drinkers Club**

If someone has dysphagia, typically they need a long-term supply of thickener. Despite this they cannot obtain discounts for frequent use. This seems unfair when it is a necessity.

We therefore created the Slō Drinkers Club.

This entitles Slō Drinks buyers to receive discounts. The more they buy the higher the discount as we presume, they need it more.

It also entitles them to special offers at Christmas and Valentine's Day.

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### **What is in Slō Sachets?**

They contain our special combination of Maltodextrin, Erythritol and Xanthan Gum.

Xanthan gum is an instant thickener used in all types of food and drinks. Ours has been specially formulated for those with dysphagia.

Erythritol is classed as a sweetener but is present in such small quantities 0.2g per 1g, it has a negligible impact on a calorie count.

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### **They are more expensive than a tin of thickener.**

Yes - depending on which tin of Xanthan Gum you are comparing them against and if you are making an IDDSI Level 1 drink.

No - if you make IDDSI 2,3 or 4.

Tins of thickener are expensive to prescribe when you look at the number of drinks a person actually needs per day and their degree of swallowing difficulty.

Factor in the waste: thickener degrades; many drinks are over thickened and thrown away; the number of tins required and therefore spend -grows exponentially.

This is unnecessary. One Slō Drink sachet that is sealed and makes one drink is the safer, cost effective alternative.

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### **Are your Slō Drinks in sachets more expensive than Resource Thicken Up sticks?**

Gram for gram, we are the same for IDDSI Level 1. For all other Levels using a Slō sachet is significantly cheaper. See above.

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### **Do Slō Drinks made from your sachets thicken over time?**

Cold Drinks don't. Hot drinks do thicken moderately.

This is because we have to add extra thickener to compensate for the temperature of the drink. Hot drinks make it difficult for the thickener to work.

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### **Do Slō Sachets contain any allergens?**

No. It is free of all 10 key allergens. It is packaged in a factory that packs milk.

However, if you are in any doubt about its suitability it is your responsibility to check with a health professional.

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### **Why do you have more gum in your sachets than Resource Thicken Up sticks?**

They only have enough in for a small drink. Ours contains enough to make 500mls at a time.

That saves time allowing someone to make several thickened drinks in one go.

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### **Does your Gum contain Sodium?**

Yes. It is slightly less than Resource.

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### **Is there a maximum volume of Xanthan gum and therefore maximum number of Slō sachets that can be used per day?**

No.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (**FAO**) and World Health Organization (**WHO**) - Codex Alimentarius International Food Standards: give Xanthan gum an Acceptable Daily Intake (**ADI**) of "not specified" by the FAO/WHO Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA).

#### Europe

Europe does not have an **ADI** for xanthan gum. Xanthan gum (E 415) is listed in Annex I of the

European Parliament and Council Directive 95/2/EC of 20th February 1995 on food additives, and may be used at "quantum satis" (i.e. at any level required) in many food categories.

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### **Are there any reasons for not using Xanthan Gum? (Not contained in Slō Milkshakes+)**

According to WHO drinkers, before using Xanthan Gum they are advised to consult their doctor or appointed healthcare professional if they:

- Are Pregnant or breast-feeding
- Has appendicitis
- Has a narrowing of your intestines (intestinal stenosis)
- Has a blockage in their bowel
- Are scheduled for surgery in the next two weeks.

Xanthan gum can cause some side effects such as intestinal gas (flatulence) and bloating. If you are in any doubt, consult a doctor.

If a dysphagia patient requires emergency surgery, then their surgery team will take in account they are using Xanthan Gum and decide how to proceed.

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**Why do you give these reasons for not using Xanthan Gum i.e . not for use in pregnancy when others don't?**

We list them because that is what the World Health Organization recommend and think it is responsible to list them.

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**Your sachets all have the same gum in them, just different preparation instructions. Why?**

It's all about the patient. If they fancy a particular drink, only that drink will do. That's what they can taste on their tongue.

By having a sachet specifically for that drink, we hope to enhance the patient's experience.

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**Does your gum work with soluble laxatives such as Movicol and Laxido?**

Yes. Its unique formulation makes it work very well. However. these products need to be mixed with 125mls of water. That is a lot for someone with a swallowing difficulty to consume. They also taste foul.

Pill alternatives are available, and we therefore recommend using these with Pill-Eze.

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**Do you have any references which support the statement "Xanthan Gum should not be taken if the drinker is pregnant or breast feeding etc."**

This information is listed across several sites. However we have found one that lists them all. Here is the link...

[http://www.emedicinehealth.com/xanthan\\_gum-page2/vitamins-supplements.htm](http://www.emedicinehealth.com/xanthan_gum-page2/vitamins-supplements.htm)

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## **What are Slō Milkshakes+?**

They are the 1<sup>st</sup> pre-thickened and powdered protein rich oral nutritional supplement specifically created for those with dysphagia.

They are used on the wards in UK NHS Hospitals, are available on prescription for all Doctors across the UK and bought via our online shop and sold around the world.

Currently available in Chocolate, Strawberry and Banana Flavours.

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## **Are they safe?**

Slō Drinks has been around for 15 years and our focus is providing easy ways to provide safe and palatable drinks that flow slowly for dysphagia patient's healthcare needs. This is what drives us. you can read our story at: [https://www.slodrinks.com/category/about\\_slodrinks/](https://www.slodrinks.com/category/about_slodrinks/)

We are pioneers in testing how a drink affects the way thickeners work and the only company in the world to use different thickeners for different drinks. Slō Milkshakes+ are the ONS available at all IDDSI Levels.

As a result, you can be confident your patient will always have a drink that is safer for them to swallow.

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## **What's the difference between Slō Milkshakes+ and ready-to-drink pre-thickened supplements or thickening a powdered supplement?**

Slō Milkshakes+ contain a thickener that is formulated to work with milk.

Consequently, they provide the security of a pre-made one for the price of a powdered one and remove all the stress associated with trying to thicken ordinary liquid supplements and powdered ones.

These cannot be thickened safely because the high fat content of the supplement prevents the starch and gum thickeners bonding to the milk.

Slō Milkshakes+ therefore provide all the security of pre-made supplements for the cost of powdered ones.

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## **Efficacy**

All our drinks are tested thoroughly before being sold.

The Slō Milkshakes+ started development in 2014. After 4 years of development and patient testing. They were approved for prescription in 2018.

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### **Are they nutritionally complete?**

No. They are deficient by approximately 0.2mg on 4 vitamins.

However, it is important to remember Slō Milkshakes+ are the right flow rate, palatable and are therefore more likely to be drunk.

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### **Are they amylase resistant and do they maintain consistency over time?**

Yes. If kept in the fridge they will be fine all day. They must be drunk on the day they are made.

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### **What flow rates/consistencies are they?**

They are available in IDDSI Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

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### **Can you make them with semi-skimmed milk in them?**

Yes – but this will affect the nutritional content.

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### **Can you use Warm or Hot milk in Slō Milkshakes+**

No. Slō Milkshakes+ are designed for cold milk.

Heat allows the molecules in the thickener to move more quickly, so they don't bind the molecules in the liquid.

You therefore must use more thickener or reduce the volume of liquid to compensate. That turns it into a trial and error situation which is not ideal.

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### **Are they suitable for people with coeliac disease?**

Yes.

There are some ingredients which are made from a cereal containing gluten where the grain is processed in such a way that the gluten is removed. These ingredients are safe for people with [coeliac disease](#) and therefore it is not necessary for the manufacturer to list the cereal they first came from. The glucose syrups derived from wheat in our Slō Milkshakes+ is therefore safe.

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### **Are they sweet?**

No. This was one of the biggest complaints we heard about the other pre-thickened supplements and so we have made sure they are not sickly sweet.

They do not have a minerally aftertaste either.

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### **Any drug interactions**

Slō Milkshakes+ haven't been tested as it is not a requirement for ONS.  
A Pharmacist would advise how milk - based products would be affected.

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### **What is their shelf life?**

Up to 18 months.

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### **Which country is the product manufactured in?**

Slō Drinks is a privately owned UK Company and we manufacture here in the UK.

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### **Which of the wholesalers are Slō Milkshakes stocked in?**

Alliance is our appointed Wholesaler. All other wholesalers and Pharmacies can order from them under the TPOS agreement.

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### **How long are the current prices guaranteed for? Will prices change with the introduction of more cost-effective brands by other companies?**

The prices are set and can't be increased, other than by the rate of inflation.  
Slō Milkshakes+ are already the most cost effective pre-thickened ONS on prescription.  
The saving over other pre-thickened and ready to drink ONS is £80+ per patient per month.

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**Pill-Eze is a Slõ Drink** created to make pills easy to swallow.

It can be used with medicinal pills, capsules and supplements. It's a thickened liquid that holds them so they won't get stuck and its sweet cherry flavour makes them taste nice.

Easy to use - simply put a pill or capsule on a spoon and cover it with about 5mls of Pill-Eze, then swallow together and finish with water if necessary.

Pill-Eze is suitable for all those with swallowing difficulties. If diagnosed with dysphagia it is suitable for those on IDDSI Levels 1, 2 and 3 fluids as it matches the IDDSI 3 (Moderately thick) flow rate.

It is virtually chemically inert and compares to the Ph level of the stomach (4.2pH) so can safely be used with a wide range of tablets and other solid dose forms.

It has been subjected to over 100 scientific compatibility studies and as a result with the exceptions of: effervescent and crushed tablets; rapid dissolving, sustained release medication or those containing Iodine - you can use Pill-Eze with pills, tablets and (liquid containing) capsules, vitamin preparations, food supplements and other solid dosage forms meant to be swallowed

More information available at [www.pill-eze.com](http://www.pill-eze.com)

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Slõ Protein powders: Slõ Soy, Whey and Pea Protein are to support a Food First Approach.

**Not** for body builders – they provide a simple, safe way for your dysphagia patients, those with swallowing difficulties and small appetites to increase protein levels, easily and safely.

Instead of using high calorie fortifiers like full fat butter, creams and oils that ultimately have a detrimental effect on health, they can use Slõ Protein Powders to ensure every mouthful matters and is packed with essential protein.

We have provided three alternatives to accommodate all diet needs and all are flavourless.

Whilst initially created to fortify soups, they all dissolve easily in hot and cold foods, making them a safe and ideal protein boost to texture modified breakfasts, snacks, meals and even desserts. Every 15g (heaped tablespoon) a dish will be fortified with 12g of Slõ Protein!

They can be bought from us at [www.slodrinks.com/shop](http://www.slodrinks.com/shop)

If you are intending to add to a hot meal, it is best to add as a meal is warming up – especially soup. It is always difficult to disperse powders in hot meals.

Slõ Syrup is a flavourless concentrate for thickening cold drinks (200mls). Some call it a liquid thickener.

It overcomes all the issues with measuring thickener from tins with a scoop.

- **IDDSI Consistency**

It means an end to the “scoop and hope” and over thickening caused by the scoop supplied in tins of thickener.

Slõ Syrup reduces the risks of these mixing errors by providing a standardized solution. It ensures the correct amount of concentrate is always added and desired thickness reliably obtained.

- **Convenience**

Provided ready to use, it cuts the time and effort required to make a drink. This is especially helpful in a Nursing Homes/ Care facilities and Hospitals where there are many people needing thickened drinks.

- **Quick and easy to use**

Each Slõ Syrup bottle is colour coded to match the IDDSI Levels and features pictorial instructions for use to reduce training time. That makes it easy to incorporate into daily routines without disruption.

E.g. To make a drink to IDDSI 1. Pick the Grey labelled bottle and push the pump once. For an IDDSI Level 2 drink, pick the pink labelled bottle and add two pumps. An IDDSI Level 3, pick the yellow labelled bottle and add three pumps.

It mixes quickly to create a smooth – lump free drink that looks like an ordinary, un-thickened drink and tastes like one.

Slõ Syrup is flavourless allowing the drinker to enjoy the “real” taste of their favourite drink. Ultimately, making it easier to gain compliance and maintain their fluid intake.

- **Longevity once opened**

Once opened Slõ Syrup has a longer shelf life than thickener in tins. As you know the thickener in a newly opened tin works differently to a tin that has been opened and used for a while. It's even worse if a wet spoon has been used or left in the tin.

Slõ Syrup works just as well when its nearly finished as it does when it's opened. This reduces waste and ensures every drink is always safer to drink.

- **Health and Safety**

Once the pump has been cleaned and added to the bottle, no hands touch Slõ Syrup. It goes straight into the drink. As a liquid, there are no airborne particles of thickener that can be breathed in. It is also free of all known allergens.

- **Cost Efficient**

Whilst the initial investment in SIō Syrup may be perceived as slightly higher than the thickener in tins: as the points above show it provides significant immediate and long term savings.

***Response to Professionals (Clinicians, GP's, Therapists. Nursing Home Managers)***

Yes. Just go to [www.slodrinks.com](http://www.slodrinks.com), click the HCP button at the top of the page. That takes you to the Clinicians Library and click the Sample button to open a secure encrypted on-line form at or email [samples@slodrinks.com](mailto:samples@slodrinks.com) tell us what Slō Drinks you want and where you want them sent and we will post them for you.

***Response to General public making a request for a spouse or relative***

Yes – samples can be bought via our shop [www.slodrinks.com/shop](http://www.slodrinks.com/shop) For a fee they can have any 3 Slō Drinks to try (This will change depending on which Country you are in). The cost will then be deducted from a 1<sup>st</sup> order.

### Contact details

T: +44(0)03452 222 205

E: support@slodrinks.com

W: [www.slodrinks.com](http://www.slodrinks.com)

**Whatsapp:** 07538 803 175

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