

## ***Who are Slō Drinks Ltd?***

The Slō Drinks Company is an independent British company, specializing in making drinks for people with dysphagia that flow slowly so they're safer to swallow.

### **For hydration**

Slō Hot, Slō Cold Drinks and Slō Fizzy

### **For hydration & nutrition**

Slō Milkshakes

### **For relaxation**

Slō Wine, Cider, Lager, Beer, Bubbly and Slō Mixer

Slō Drinks flow slowly so they are safer to swallow. To make Slō Drinks, we deposit individual\* cups & sachets with doses of our thickeners which dissolve quickly and are tasteless.

Each thickener\*\* is formulated to suite each drink and only requires mixing with the specified amount of fluid to reach the prescribed consistency Stage 1: Syrup, 2: Custard or 3: Pudding and make it flow slowly enough for the drinker to cope with.

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 and medication; and want for relaxation, are safe to swallow.

This reduces the risk of aspiration, it's costly complications, (aspiration pneumonia & dehydration), which ultimately reduces the long-term care costs associated with this patient group.

## ***What is the difference between Slō Drinks, 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 it's 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.

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.

## ***What diets are they suitable for?***

Vegetarian, Halal, Kosher – except the hot chocolate in cups

## ***Are they suitable for diabetics?***

The **Slō Drinks Cups**, which are suitable, are: Slō Tea and Slō Coffee. The rest of the range contains a small amount of sugar and is used with diabetics 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.

Slō Drinks in sachets – the Slō Juice can be made with no and lo sugar drinks

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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.

That's taken from an American study done a few years ago into modified maize starches.

***Do they match the National Descriptors?***

Yes, and those used in other countries.

Consequently, you can have a Slō Drink Stage 1: Syrup in the UK; a Slō Drinks Stage 1: Nectar in America or a Stage 1: Mildly Thick drink in Australia. The consistencies are all the same it is the description that changes for each country.

***Are the consistencies certified?***

There is no certification for consistency only recommended flow rates.

Slō Drinks consistencies are based on what is the correct consistency according to approx. 1000 clinicians.

That's how many we presented and re-presented prototypes to over two and half years to end up with the consistencies of Slō Drinks.

We therefore apply those clinician approved consistencies/ flow rates to all our drinks so they all match.

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

Everyone has his or her own perception of the terms syrup, custard and pudding consistency.

Consequently, Slō Drinks are guaranteed to always be a specific consistency.

It might not be the same as yours or your colleagues, but you know it will always be a specific consistency so you will have a standard to work to.

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

Our drinks are made by machine.

The quantity of thickeners added to our cups and sachets is accurate plus or minus 0.2 of a gram.

That's about enough to cover your small finger nail.

***Do they thin out or separate?***

No.

***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.

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

It's due to the formulation of our thickeners.

***Do you do Fortified Drinks?***

Slō Milkshakes made with full fat milk.

***Can you add medication?***

Slō Drinks Cups: We do know people that have added crushed tablets to our cups

Slō Drinks from Sachets: we have Slō Soluble which you add to dissolved soluble medication and Slō Solulax which you add to soluble laxatives. e.g. Movicol and Laxido. Our gum is the only one to work well with these products

In both cases, you have to check with your patients Therapist/ GP first these options are suitable for the patients.

***Can I add crushed medication to them?***

You would have to check with the GP. Tablet medication shouldn't be crushed.

It's contraindicated and doesn't guarantee that the medication will be delivered correctly and released as required.

***Can I add medication in oral suspension?***

You must check with the GP.

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

No. We feel that would be a backward step.

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.

***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 thickeners thickening ability.

***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.

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

No. They curdle.

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

Yes they are to buy BUT...when drinks made with them go down the sink rather than your patient because they are the wrong consistency and unpalatable, cheaper alternatives are a false economy.

Consequently, Slō Drinks are far more cost effective to use:

- They always meet the consistency prescribed.
- One sleeve or case of drinks can be shared between patients/residents/clients eliminating the costly one tin one patient approach.
- 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.

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

Anything from 1 to 16 months.

When you open a sleeve Slō Drinks in Cups, they will stay fresh for 3 months as long as you keep them in a clean, dry cupboard with the lid on.

### ***Who is using them?***

16 Hospitals now. The biggest and longest users are Manchester Royal Teaching Hospital,

Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen Hospitals who have used them since 2007.

They are being prescribed by Therapists, Clinicians and Nurses all across the country.

### ***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.

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

Normally within 48 hours. Mon to Friday

## ***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 or fax and order through, with an official order number and they will arrive 48 hours later.

If you give me your email address I will send you a data sheet with all the information on you need to order.

#### **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.

#### **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.

If you give me your name and address, I'll send you some prescription forms.

### ***Can patients buy them direct?***

Yes.

### ***Do you do samples?***

Yes.

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

### ***If it's for clinicians***

We have small samples of all Slō cold drinks and Slō hot drinks at all consistencies. Each pack contains two cups of drinks at one consistency.

### ***If it's for a patient,***

We need written confirmation for our records. Can you therefore email [suppor@slodrinks.com](mailto:suppor@slodrinks.com) the consistency you've prescribed and we'll organise it for you.

We can send them direct to your patient if you wish.

### ***Training Day***

We can send you complete sleeve of drinks to try.

Just let us know how many attendees you have so we can make sure you have enough for everyone and when it is.

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

Yes, But we need you to email us and confirm which consistency their (your) Therapists has prescribed as safe.

Can you email it to [support@slodrinks.com](mailto:support@slodrinks.com)

### ***I don't think I can send my patient's address 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.

### ***Why do you call them Slō Drinks?***

They move slowly and it sounds more appealing.

### ***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!

Slō Drinks is an independent British, privately owned company.

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

You would have to ask them that!

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 patients rehabilitation has grown dramatically.

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

Yes.

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

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

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

Products on this list are not, generally prescribed. But, you 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.

We can supply data about the efficacy of our drinks if you want it.

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

The problem with other thickeners is the manufacturers 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 over comes this immediately.

### ***How did the company start? Response from our MD.***

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

My name is Mathew Done and I've worked in the food and drink industry for over 20 years, specializing in the Catering Sector promoting brands and creating new products. For 13 of them I've worked in the NHS on Special Diets and for 11 of those I've focused on the field of dysphagia.

Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing difficulties. It affects the epiglottis, the flap of skin at the top of lungs/stomach. It doesn't work properly and so ordinary foods like you and I have flow to fast for it to cope with. Consequently they go into the lungs instead of the stomach and induce choking.

If not managed the person can develop aspiration pneumonia, become dehydrated and ultimately die. To prevent these complications they need their meals pureed to a specific consistency and so I helped

develop a range of high calorie meals that looked good, tasted good and did those with dysphagia good.

### ***It's after one of these tastings I asked the question that has taken up the last 9 years of my life...***

After leaving the hospital I Googled thickened drinks and discovered tins of thickener were the product of choice. These contain a modified maize starch which you spooned into a drink to thicken it up.

This format had been used for over 15 years with no developments and several brands promoting the same thing. That suggested to me most were happy with it. Wrong!

When thickener from tins is added to a drink, it doesn't work straight away and so carers tend to add more. They then pass to the drinker a drink that looks like grey wallpaper paste. It can turn the taste of a drink sour. The thickener may not have dissolved and will need sieving through teeth and leave a gritty sticky residue on their teeth.

### ***I couldn't believe in the 21st century those with dysphagia have to put up with drinks like this. They should still be able to have something enjoyable to drink – despite their condition!***

That started a 5 months research project into what drinks were being served and how they could be improved. I saw patients given drinks too thick or too thin for their swallowing ability. Some drinks separated within minutes. Some got thicker. Drinks stirred with the end of a pen and passed to patients with iceberg-sized un-dissolved pieces of thickener floating on the top of them.

The final straw was seeing someone making a thickened drink and getting more thickener around the cup than it. It was like a snow scene from Narnia!

I spent the next 6 months developing products, showing them to clinicians, therapists and carers around the UK using tins of thickeners. Most of my suggestions were rejected. Some said, "You're wasting your time." Others said, "We've been using it for years and it does the job. Why change now!"

Despite that, I carried on and spoke to as many people as I could, taking on opinions and useful suggestions, making improvements as I went. This carried on for months. Until thousands of miles, plenty of late nights, early mornings and weekends - success.

In 18 months I'd managed to create a drink that tasted good and was safe to swallow. Provided in a cup with a drink flavouring and a quantity of our unique tasteless, quick dissolving thickener, carers only had to add water to make a pleasant drink that was safer to swallow.

I presented Slō Drinks to Manchester Royal Infirmary on a Wednesday afternoon and no changes were asked for! The following day presented them to the Royal Liverpool and the same response.

**Shortly after I received an order and both Hospitals started to use them. That led to another trial – putting Slō Drinks on prescription.**

Uniquely Great Britain's National Health Service has something called Continuity of Care, if you have something in Hospital it should be available to you after discharge on prescription.

That means making a prescription application to NICE the UK's prescription approving authority. It took 9 months to prepare the application.

The Slō Cold Juice drinks were approved. Unfortunately, the hot drinks were not and so I spent the next 18 months collating the extra evidence to prove their case. Slō Hot Chocolate, Slō White Coffee and Slō White Tea are now available on prescription.

**Our Slō Drinks in cups have now been joined by a new range of drinks – Slō Drinks from sachets. These like our original drinks came from a conversation. But this one didn't start well.**

At a meeting in a hospital that will remain nameless, one of the clinicians was laughing about Slow Gin and I thought she was doing it at our expense. I was assured she wasn't. Those with dysphagia still like alcohol but existing thickeners don't mix with well with it.

Despite this those with dysphagia try to thicken alcohol and are known to take tins of thickener to a pub!

I didn't intend to do anything about this. We only focused on providing drinks for health care - not for fun. It was only after hearing about an elderly lady that wanted to take wine at Communion and couldn't because she had dysphagia we decided to try and help.

We sourced a tasteless, quick dissolving thickener that works with wine and put a dose of it into a sachet for one 175ml glass. It just needs adding to the wine, to make it safer to swallow.

As a result red, white or rosé wines can now be changed into Slō Wine.

By accident we discovered the same thickener works with fizzy drinks and so children can change their favourite fizzy drinks into: Slō Cola, Slō 7UP, Slō Irn Bru etc. These look amazing as the bubbles are trapped in the drink. On a hunch we tried it in alcoholic drinks with bubbles and it worked just as well. Slō Lager, Slō Beer, Slō Bubbly and Slō Mixer for use with Gin & Tonic etc.

You can imagine how satisfying it is to hear people like it; that someone's Mum has been able to enjoy a glass of wine for the first time in 8 months or their Dad a beer and the pleasure it gives them.

**This led to our latest development, the Slō Medicinal range.**

Oral ingestion of medication is seen to be more convenient; have higher compliance, safety, efficiency, ease of accessibility and low cost – unless a person has dysphagia.

This requires the preparation of liquid medications which are expensive, take time to produce and will not necessarily be safe to swallow for the patient. Our thickener is changing that.

- Slō Soluble mixes soluble pain relief, medication and vitamins. The dose is only enough to mix with 100ml of water; the smallest volume that can be safely changed to a specific consistency.
- Slō Solulax changes the consistency of soluble laxatives and is the only one which works with them.
- Slō Cold & Flu mixes with hot – cold & flu relief such as Lemsip and Beechams.



**That brings us to today.**

Every drink that someone with dysphagia needs can now be changed into a Slō Drink. Whoever makes them, Slō Drinks will match the consistency prescribed and can be drunk without worry.

We now sell our sachets globally. Dysphagia is a worldwide condition.

56 million people are suffering with it today.

# Slō Dinks Sachets

## ***What is in Slō Sachets?***

They contain a special combination of Maltodextrin 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.

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

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

## ***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 it's suitability it is your responsibility to check with a health professional.

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

They only have enough in for a small drink.

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

Yes. It is slightly less than Resource.

Our Slō Drinks in cups, which use modified maize starch have much lower levels

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

Gram for gram, we are the same for Stage 1. For stage 2, we are significantly cheaper.

## ***Is there a maximum volume of Xanthan gum and therefore maximum number of Slō sachets I can use 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.

## ***Are there any reasons for not using Xanthan Gum?***

The drinker must not use Xanthan Gum 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.

***Your sachets all have the same amount of 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.

***Does your gum with soluble laxatives?***

Yes. It's unique formulation makes it work very well.

***About Movicol/Laxido- Can you add Slō Solulax to Milk or fortified juices that have Movicol or Laxido in them?***

No! These products must only be mixed with 125ml of water to work. These products are only licensed for use with water.

However, you can make these products up - **then** add a drop of juice to flavour them – then add our Slō Solulax sachet.

***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)

# Slõ Milkshakes

## ***What is in Slõ Milkshakes?***

They contain a fortified strawberry and chocolate flavouring and a thickener specially formulated to work with milk.

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

Yes, they contain the same nutritional values as existing ONS and exceed some however we don't promote the fact.

Our founder believes in a "Food First" approach and these should only be used to supplement a diet.

Consequently, by not stating they are it will avoid over reliance on them.

## ***What stages does the Milkshake come in?***

They come in Stages 1 & 2. The Milkshakes have been tried and tested by Specialist Dysphagia

Therapists and matches the consistency of every other Slo Drink. Pre thickened supplements do not match the consistencies of pre thickened drinks.