

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DYSPHAGIA; THE USE OF RESOURCE® THICKENUP® CLEAR



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Intrinsic Properties

Resource® ThickenUp® Clear is a well-established xanthan gum-based thickener. It was developed to provide clinicians and people with dysphagia with confidence in its safety, therapeutic effectiveness and acceptability.

Since 2011, Resource® ThickenUp® Clear's amylase resistant properties have proven more effective than the starch-based agents it replaced¹. It is a versatile yet stable thickener. It dissolves rapidly and remains clear, and does not over-thicken. It is more appealing to the eye, is smooth and palatable, is odourless and flavourless, and once swallowed, remains cohesive and at the correct viscosity¹. It leaves less oropharyngeal residue than starch-based thickeners and reduces the number of airway penetrations and aspiration events².

Whilst Resource® ThickenUp® Clear proves effective under laboratory conditions and in the IDDSI flow test³, its true test is its value in the real world. Resource® ThickenUp® Clear is used in a variety of diverse settings for different populations. This is testament to its versatility, reliability and popularity.

The speech and language therapist (SLT) can rely on it whether supporting people in acute or community settings. One example is in videofluoroscopy clinic. Diagnostic fluids can be feasibly matched with thickened beverages using Resource® ThickenUp® Clear by adopting tailor-made 'recipes'⁴.

Therapeutic Effectiveness

Thickener is a mainstay of dysphagia management both in hospitals and in the community. As the evidence-base progresses, so does SLTs' practice. SLTs have the expertise to understand the properties of Resource® ThickenUp® Clear to inform its appropriate use in focussed therapy. For example, at Level 2 viscosity, its therapeutic effect relies on its intrinsic texture properties, whereas at Level 4 viscosity, it precipitates changes in swallow physiology¹.

Resource® ThickenUp® Clear can form a fundamental part of multi-component individualised interventions in dysphagia management to improve outcomes and well-being.

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This may involve its use along with nutritional supplementation and oral care⁵, education and training, therapy exercises and strategies. Once the SLT has recommended Resource® ThickenUp® Clear as part of a therapy plan, it is either the person with dysphagia, their family, or healthcare professionals who prepare the thickened drinks. *Training is key.*

Safety Briefings, Training and Support

Nestlé Health Science has long recognised the importance of free safety briefings, training and ongoing support in the implementation of Resource® ThickenUp® Clear. Translating its benefits from its intrinsic properties to its therapeutic effectiveness and enjoyment in the real world poses challenges. Ineffectively mixed thickened drinks can result in dehydration, sub-therapeutic effects, risk of choking or aspiration pneumonia, and reduced quality of life⁷.

For that reason, and because they recognise the importance of SLTs' time undertaking clinical duties, Nestlé Health Science provide these services for healthcare professionals across a number of settings, for example in care homes. For residents with dysphagia, it is everyone's responsibility to keep them safe and optimise their quality of life. Ensuring the enjoyment as well as safety of thickened drinks is an example of this⁸.

Nestlé Health Science representatives liaise closely with SLTs, care home managers and other healthcare professionals to ensure that training can be delivered in a practical, timely, flexible and comprehensive manner, including via tele-training to minimise COVID19 risk and via N+ Education Hub online. This all ensures a consistent and safe approach in the thickening of drinks.

In Summary

The clinical effectiveness of Resource® ThickenUp® Clear is proven in acute and community settings with the combination of three important factors;

- its intrinsically effective properties evidenced in multiple studies^{1,2,9-11}
- its evidence-based therapeutic use by SLTs
- its application in the real world following education, training and ongoing support