

SIMPLYTHICK™ PROVIDES LIFESTYLE CHANGE FOR FIVE-YEAR OLD BOY

New Thickening Agent Enables Boy to Have G-Tube Removed

Gastrostomy tubes, better known as G-Tubes, provide life-sustaining hydration and nutrition to millions of people around the world. Lincoln Evans is a five-year old boy from Murray, Utah, who has benefited from the use of a G-tube because he experienced continual swallowing problems associated with thin liquids. As grateful as he is for the assistance he received from the G-tube, he is overjoyed that a new thickening agent called SimplyThick™ has enabled him to live without it.

So is his mother, Becky Evans, who has seen the dramatic difference that SimplyThick is making in Lincoln's life.

Since birth, Lincoln experienced colds and chronic pneumonia, says Becky. Doctors conducted a myriad of tests on the young boy as they sought answers to what was causing chest infections and severe colds. In October 1999, they discovered an Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) or a hole in the wall between the heart's upper chambers. Lincoln eventually underwent heart surgery in July 2000 to correct this problem, but the doctors were concerned about other medical issues.

They conducted a lung biopsy on Lincoln in November 1999 that proved inconclusive. In December 1999, the doctors determined that Lincoln was aspirating, sometimes silently, on thin liquids. Tests revealed that he suffered from a delay in the pharyngeal phase of swallowing. Lincoln was able to eat most consistencies of food but thin liquids were entering the trachea instead of the esophagus. These liquids were going directly into his lungs.

Becky is a speech-language pathologist and knew that Lincoln's health problems could be solved with effective treatment of his dysphagia, or swallowing problems.

"I know that treating dysphagia can involve a variety of exercises, as well as special foods, equipment and techniques to improve feeding and swallowing. We knew that Lincoln's age would present a number of obstacles, but we were prepared to do whatever it took to improve his health."

Effective treatment did indeed prove to be evasive. Becky attempted to get Lincoln to use thickening agents in his liquids, but Lincoln hated the taste. In order to provide for adequate nutrition for growth and development, in November 1999, at age 3, Lincoln was placed on a nasogastric tube.

The health problems and nutrition concerns continued. As the next step, Lincoln was placed on a G-Tube, in February 2001, to facilitate hydration. He used the G-tube three to five times a day.

The G-tube did strengthen Lincoln's overall health but Becky continued to investigate other options for treatment.

"I wanted to find a way he could get his liquids without a 'button' holding him back from being like other little boys," she said.

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A new product called SimplyThick that was introduced at the end of 2001 especially intrigued Becky. "I read an advertisement about SimplyThick that explained how it is different than any other product on the market today because it mixes so thoroughly and doesn't affect the taste of the liquid, so I decided to try it."

Becky contacted Phagia-Gel Technologies, the producers of SimplyThick, to obtain samples of the product in February 2002. The results were very positive. "I was overjoyed to see that Lincoln liked SimplyThick, and I wasted no time in requesting a regular supply of the product," she said.

In March of 2002, Lincoln began using SimplyThick at least twice a day, orally drinking 16 oz. of fluids daily. By June 2002, after just three short months of using the product, Lincoln was meeting all of his fluid needs orally with SimplyThick and was able to have the G-tube removed. Today, Lincoln continues to drink his beverages thickened with SimplyThick.

John Holahan, Inventor and Founder of SimplyThick, says that patient compliance was a primary factor in the product formulation. "We knew that dysphagia patients often resist complying with dietary recommendations related to thickening agents. SimplyThick, unlike other thickeners that come in powder form, comes in a gel form," says Holahan. "This enables SimplyThick to be mixed thoroughly in beverages and, once stirred properly, will not continue to thicken or clump."

Becky Evans says that this was Lincoln's main complaint with the other products. "He didn't like the clumps."

SimplyThick also has the capability of doing something else that the other agents cannot. It thickens all beverages – hot and cold – while most other thickeners work with only a limited number of liquids. Becky Evans adds SimplyThick to juices, punch and milk for Lincoln.

"It is gratifying to hear that SimplyThick is making life more pleasurable for people like Lincoln," says Holahan. "Perhaps not all patients will experience such a dramatic change in their lifestyle, but it is SimplyThick's purpose to improve the health and the quality of life for those who suffer from swallowing disorders."

