

Allison Rose
Maxime Lingura

People with Parkinson's Disease and Essential tremors need an improved Maddak BG2 "half covered" plastic spoon. A key feature identified from research was a spoon "fully covered" that does not spill contents when lifted from bowl and placed in the user's mouth. The design strategy was to use principles from: a) kinematic analysis and synthesis; b) tribology for reducing friction between moving parts and; c) basic science of thermoplastics. Each spoon was tested until failure occurred against six design criteria by a trained human participant simulating a Parkinson's person tremor. Pass or fail was documented at dipping in a bowl of water, moving a spoonful to mouth, and placing in mouth without spilling. The benchmark BG2 spoon passed only 10% without spilling. This demonstrated the need for a fully covered spoon. First prototypes, P1 and P2, used a first order lever with spring force to maintain closure by default. It included parts from the BG2 spoon. Although passing 50% for spilling during movement, this design failed for safety because the cover struck the user's face. Kinematic analysis ruled out a solution (Works Cited 9). The final prototype, P3, used a sliding cover with parts from the BG2 spoon attached to a pneumatic piston and passed 75% for not spilling during movement. Pressure was created by the tremoring user's manual squeeze/grip force (Works Cited 8 and 10). All spoons passed 100% for all other criteria. Prototype P3 pneumatically kept the cover over the spoon fully during movement. It demonstrated that a sliding cover was sufficient in performance to recommend as a design strategy for the next prototype.