

A Different Kind of Booster

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Ryan with his parents and a friend.

Our 13-year-old son Ryan has been vent-dependent since the age of four months. He has always been very sensitive to humidity, having great difficulty using a stand-alone heat-moisture exchanger (HME). This made venturing out of our home very difficult. When my wife, Jackie, and I took Ryan anywhere for any length of time, he suffered with thick secretions and a blocked tracheostomy for days afterwards, requiring lots of suctioning and several trach changes. We were severely limited in what we could do outside our home, because the risks to Ryan's health were not worth it.

As a physician and parent of a special needs child, I am always on the lookout for medical products to benefit my son. Several years ago, I came across an advertisement for the HME-Booster® in a respiratory journal. Intrigued, I contacted the distributor and purchased one (about \$200 which was eventually reimbursed by our insurance) to try with my son. It works in conjunction with an HME, adding extra humidity and heat to the vent circuit.

I was immediately impressed with how well it worked for Ryan, but decided to make some modifications to make it more portable. The Booster I purchased is DC-powered with an AC transformer. I removed the AC transformer and direct-wired the booster to the battery on my son's chair, eliminating the need for AC power.

Initially, we used the Booster for outings around town, and Ryan did very well, but the real test came during our annual vacation to Walt Disney World®. Before the Booster, we needed

to add saline to Ryan's HME throughout the day, and even though Ryan loved the experience, he would suffer for a week after our trip with respiratory issues.

With the Booster, we can spend the entire day at the parks with no problems whatsoever. This product has completely eliminated the problems Ryan had when traveling, giving us all the freedom to enjoy life.

Now, we are out and about all the time. Ryan has a custom bike, similar to a rickshaw; the front half is a wheelchair and the back is a regular bike. Thanks to the Booster, we enjoy weekend bike rides as a family. We have even used the Booster to take Ryan out on a boat and to numerous concerts by his favorite musicians.

The difference this product has made in the quality of all of our lives is astounding. The Booster has given our family more opportunities to explore the world; it enables Ryan to live his life to the fullest. ▲

EDITOR'S NOTE: The HME-Booster® is manufactured by Medisize (www.medisize.com) in The Netherlands and is distributed by Hamilton Medical Products in the USA. (Customer Service, 800-426-6331, ext. 222, www.hamilton-medical.com.) A version of the Booster that is "modified" similar to Dr. Sharkey's modifications may be available later in the year. Contact Eric Kroon, Product Manager, Eric.Kroon@hamiltonmedical.net.