
Discharge Instructions: Having a Clear Liquid Diet

Your healthcare provider has prescribed a clear liquid diet for you. This temporary diet is often prescribed right before surgery or medical tests when you need to have your stomach and intestines free of any food. This diet may also be prescribed after certain types of surgery or if solid food is not tolerated. The clear liquid diet is easy to digest and helps the body gradually get used to food again.

Home care

- This diet is temporary. Don't follow this diet longer than directed. It doesn't provide enough energy or protein for proper nutrition.
- If you are on this diet for more than 3 to 4 days, you may need nutritional or vitamin supplements. Talk with your healthcare provider about this.
- Keep track of what you eat and drink and how much while on this diet. Keep a log for your healthcare provider.

Choose these foods

The following foods are OK to have when you are on a clear liquid diet:

- Water; ice chips
- Fruit juices without pulp, such as filtered apple juice, grape juice, cranberry juice, and pulp-free lemonade
- Fruit punch or fruit drinks with no pulp or pieces
- Hot or cold coffee or tea (don't add milk or creamers of any type)
- Clear sodas (lemon-lime soda, ginger ale)
- Sports drinks
- Clear soup (low-sodium and fat-free broth or bouillon)
- Plain or flavored gelatin (don't add fruit or toppings)
- Frozen juice bars made from clear juices (no pulp or fruit pieces)

Don't have these foods

- Fruit juices with pulp or nectar, such as prune juice
- Milk, yogurt, and pudding
- Cream-based soups
- Any food or drink not on the approved list above

Ask your healthcare provider if you should skip foods and drinks containing red or purple food coloring. They can leave results that looks like blood on tests.

Follow-up

Follow up with your healthcare provider as advised.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Diarrhea that lasts for longer than 24 hours
- Vomiting that does not stop
- Trouble urinating
- Trouble passing gas
- Abdominal pain with bloating and cramping