

Clear Liquid Diet

Background:

A clear liquid diet consists of most liquids you can easily see through like water, broth, and plain gelatin. These liquids are easily digested and leave no residue in your intestinal tract. A clear liquid diet should not be continued for more than 3-5 days as it cannot provide you with adequate calories and nutrients, and should not be tried without physician supervision.

Purpose:

A clear liquid diet helps maintain adequate hydration, provides important electrolytes like sodium and potassium, and gives some energy when a full diet isn't possible. A clear liquid diet is often prescribed in preparation for surgery, or if you have certain digestive problems, such as nausea, vomiting or diarrhea because clear liquids are easily absorbed by the body and reduce stimulation of the digestive system. This diet is also used in preparation for medical procedures like sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, or some x-rays.

What is considered a Clear Liquid?

You can eat or drink only things you can see through. These are acceptable clear liquids:

- Plain water
- Fruit juices without pulp, such as apple juice, grape juice or cranberry juice
- Strained lemonade or fruit punch
- Clear, fat-free broth (bouillon or consommé)
- Clear sodas (Ginger Ale, Sprite)
- Plain gelatin (Jell-O)
- Honey
- Popsicles without bits of fruit or fruit pulp
- Tea or coffee without milk or cream
- Sports drinks

It is important that the clear liquid diet be followed exactly; the value of the examination will depend on a clean digestive tract.

A clear liquid diet cannot provide you with adequate nutrients for more than several days, so attempting a clear liquid diet without physician supervision is not recommended.