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Clear Liquid Diet

The clear liquid diet provides an oral source of fluids, a small amount of energy and electrolytes. The diet requires minimal digestion and stimulation of the gastrointestinal tract, prevents dehydration, and reduces colonic residue to a minimum. The diet contains no milk or milk products. The diet may be used as a transitional step from intravenous feedings or glucose and electrolyte solutions to oral feedings as tolerated, preoperative or postoperative surgery, prior to GI tests, to reduce residue in bowel temporarily and to aid in the treatment of nausea, vomiting or diarrhea and high fever. The diet provides foods which are clear at room or body temperature and leave minimal amounts of residue in the gastrointestinal tract. It is recommended for limited periods of time, generally no longer than one or two days (48 hours). Clear liquid oral supplements may be needed if diet continues for more than 48 hours. Between meals nourishments of allowed clear liquids are recommended. Chemically formulated dietary supplements may be indicated to improve the nutrient content of the diet. The clear liquid diet is inadequate in all nutrients except water. The diet may contain 500-600 kcal per day, 5-10 gm or protein per day, 120-130 gm of carbohydrate and a small amount of potassium and sodium.

Not Recommended

- Any condition when used for more than 48 hours, as the sole means of nutrition support, for nutritionally depleted patients or for patients with extraordinary needs.
- Absence of adequate GI function, including paralytic ileus and suspected small bowel trauma, perforation or obstruction.
- Whenever parenteral rather than enteral feeding is indicated.

Food Groups

Food Group	Foods Allowed	Foods Not Allowed
Eggs	None	All
Fats	None	All
Breads	None	All
Cereals	None	All
Soups	Clear broth, bouillon, consommé	All others
Fruits & Fruit Juices	Clear fruit juices such as apple, cranberry or grape. Strained fruit juices such as orange, grapefruit or lemonade. High calorie lactose-free oral supplements.	Pulp, all fruits
Desserts	Clear flavored gelatin, popsicles, fruit ice and Italian ice made from strained fruit juices.	All others
Sweets	Sugar, salt, honey, syrup, clear sugar candy and sugar substitutes, plain hard candy	All others
Beverages	Carbonated beverages, coffee, tea, decaffeinated beverages, fruit flavored drinks	Milk, milk drinks

Sample Menu

Suggested Meal Plan	Sample Menu	Your Menu
Breakfast Fruit Juice Broth Beverage Sugar	1/2 cup Apple Juice 2/3 cup Beef Broth 1 cup Coffee 2 tsp Sugar	
Mid-Morning Snack Carbonated Beverage	1 cup Ginger Ale 1 Popsicle	
Noon Meal Broth Gelatin Dessert Beverage Sugar	2/3 cup Chicken Broth 1/2 cup Cherry Gelatin Hot Tea 2 tsp Sugar	
Mid-Afternoon Snack Fruit Juice	1/2 cup Grape Juice 1 Hard Candy Stick	
Evening Meal Broth Gelatin Dessert Beverage Sugar	2/3 cup Beef Broth 1/4 cup Orange Gelatin 1 cup Iced Tea 2 tsp Sugar	
Evening Snack Gelatin Dessert	1/2 cup Lime Gelatin	