

## **Clear Liquid Diet**

### **What is a clear liquid diet?**

- A clear liquid diet is made up of clear liquids and foods that are liquid at room temperature. Some examples of these foods or liquids are apple juice, clear broth, gelatin dessert, and weak tea. The clear liquid diet provides liquids, salt, and some nutrients for a few days until you can eat normal food.
- The clear liquid diet does not provide all the nutrients, vitamins, minerals, or calories that your body needs. A clear liquid diet may be used before a test or surgery to make sure your digestive tract is empty. The digestive tract is the path that food takes through your body as it is digested. You may also need this diet after stomach or bowel (small and large intestines) surgery, or if you have problems with eating solid food.
- The goal of this diet is to provide liquids and part of the calories you need until you can eat solid food. Clear liquids are easily digested (broken down) and do not put a strain on your stomach or intestines.

### **What can I do to make a clear liquid diet part of my recovery?**

- Following a clear liquid diet may help you feel better until you are able to eat solid food. Your caregiver will tell you how much liquid you may have each day.
- Caregivers will tell you when you can start to eat regular foods. You should not stay on the clear liquid diet for more than two or three days, unless your caregiver has told you to. Ask your caregiver, a dietitian, or a nutritionist any questions you may have about your diet plan.

### **What can I eat and drink while on a clear liquid diet?**

#### **Beverages (drinks):**

- Clear juices (such as apple, cranberry, or grape), strained citrus juices or fruit punch.
- Mild tea, without cream or milk.
- Mineral, bubbly, or plain water.
- Clear soft drinks like ginger ale, lemon-lime soda, or club soda. (No cola or root beer.)

- Clear sports drinks.

### **Soup:**

- Clear broth, bouillon, or consommé.

### **Desserts:**

- Plain popsicles. Avoid popsicles with pureed fruit or fiber in them.
- Hard candy.
- Flavored gelatin, such as Jell-O® without fruit. You may also drink gelatin as a warm beverage before it sets.

### **Other:**

- Sugar, honey, jelly or syrup.
- Herbs, mild seasonings, or salt.

### **What should I avoid eating and drinking while on a clear liquid diet?**

#### **Beverages:**

- Any beverage that you cannot see through.
- Beverages containing alcohol.
- Dairy products such as milk, hot cocoa, buttermilk, and cream.
- Fruit smoothies, nectars, fruit juices with pulp and prune juice.

**Sample menu for a 270 mL (90 ounces) clear liquid diet:** One cup is equal to 8 ounces of fluid.

- **Breakfast:** One cup of juice, three fourths of a cup of clear broth, one popsicle (equals about two ounces of liquid), and one cup of herbal tea with honey or sugar.
- **Morning snack:** One cup of a clear sports drink.
- **Lunch:** One-half of a cup of juice, three-fourths of a cup of clear broth, three-fourths of a cup of lemon-lime soda, one-half of a cup of lemon gelatin.
- **Afternoon snack:** One popsicle (equals about two ounces of liquid).

- **Evening meal:** One-half of a cup of juice, three-fourths of a cup of clear broth, three-fourths of a cup of ginger ale, one-half of a cup of flavored gelatin, and one cup of herbal tea with honey or sugar.
- **Evening snack:** One cup of flavored gelatin.

**Risks:**

- If you do not follow this diet before your test or surgery, your test or surgery may need to be scheduled for another time. You may have to follow a clear liquid diet because your body cannot digest (break down) solid foods. If you do not follow this diet as ordered, you may have diarrhea (loose, watery stool), nausea and vomiting (throwing up), gas, or bloating.
- The clear liquid diet does not provide all the nutrients you need. You should not follow this diet for more than two or three days unless your caregiver tells you to.
- You may have to drink a clear liquid nutrition supplement if you have to follow this diet for more than three days.