

Clear Liquid Diet

Definition

A clear liquid diet consists of clear liquids, such as water, broth and plain gelatin, that are easily digested and leave no undigested residue in your intestinal tract. Your doctor may prescribe a clear liquid diet before certain medical procedures or if you have certain digestive problems. Because a clear liquid diet can't provide you with adequate calories and nutrients, it shouldn't be continued for more than a few days.

Purpose

A clear liquid diet is often used before tests, procedures or surgeries that require no food in your stomach or intestines, such as before colonoscopy. It may also be recommended as a short-term diet if you have certain digestive problems, such as nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, or after certain types of surgery.

Diet details

A clear liquid diet helps maintain adequate hydration, provides some important electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, and gives some energy at a time when a full diet isn't possible or recommended.

The following foods are allowed in a clear liquid diet:

Plain water	Plain gelatin
Clear, fat-free broth (bouillon or consommé)	Strained lemonade
Clear sodas	Honey
Ice pops without bits of fruit or fruit pulp	Tea without milk or cream

Fruit juices without pulp, such as apple juice, grape juice or cranberry juice, ISOPURE Protein drinks (available at GNC)

Any foods not on the above list should be avoided. Also, for certain tests, such as colon exams, your doctor may ask you to avoid liquids or gelatin with coloring. A typical menu on the clear liquid diet may look like this.

Breakfast:

1 glass fruit juice
1 cup tea (without dairy products)
1 cup broth
1 bowl gelatin

Snack:

1 glass fruit juice
1 bowl gelatin

Lunch:

1 glass fruit juice
1 glass water
1 cup broth
1 bowl gelatin

Snack:

1 ice pop (without fruit pulp)
1 cup coffee or tea (without dairy products) or a soft drink

Dinner:

1 cup juice or water
1 cup broth
1 bowl gelatin
1 cup coffee or tea

Results

Although the clear liquid diet may not be very exciting, it does fulfill its purpose. It's designed to keep your stomach and intestines clear, limit strain to your digestive system, but keep your body hydrated as you prepare for or recover from a medical procedure.

Risks

Because a clear liquid diet can't provide you with adequate calories and nutrients, it shouldn't be used for more than a few days. Only use the clear liquid diet as directed by your doctor. If your doctor prescribes a clear liquid diet before a medical test, be sure to follow the diet instructions exactly. If you don't follow the diet exactly, you risk an inaccurate test and may have to reschedule the procedure for another time.