Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Clear Liquid Diet

This information will help you follow a clear liquid diet. Keep this resource in your kitchen. It will help you see what you can and can't eat or drink while on a clear liquid diet.

What is a clear liquid diet?

A clear liquid diet includes mostly liquids you can see through, that don't have any solids in them. These liquids are easy to digest and help keep you hydrated.

Your healthcare provider may tell you to follow a clear liquid diet:

- Before your surgery or procedure.
- For your first few meals after your surgery or procedure.
- If you have:
  - Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up).
  - Vomiting (throwing up).
  - Diarrhea (loose or watery bowel movements).

Only follow a clear liquid diet for as long as your healthcare provider tells you to. This will be a short period of time. Talk with your healthcare provider about why a clear liquid diet will help you.

While you're following a clear liquid diet:

- Drink at least 1 (8-ounce) cup of clear liquid every hour while you're awake.
- Drink different types of clear liquids. Do not just drink water, coffee, and tea.
- Do not drink any fluids that you cannot see through, such as milk or

smoothies.

- Do not drink sugar-free liquids unless you have diabetes and your healthcare provider tells you to.
- Do not eat any solid foods.

How to follow a clear liquid diet if you have diabetes

Ask the healthcare provider who manages your diabetes:

- What to do while following a clear liquid diet.
- If you need to change the dose of insulin or other diabetes medicine, if you take them.
- If you should drink sugar-free clear liquids.

Make sure to check your blood sugar level often while following a clear liquid diet. If you have questions, talk with your healthcare provider.

Examples of clear liquids

Your healthcare provider may tell you to avoid anything red, orange, or purple. This includes liquids, gelatin (Jell-O®), and hard candies. **If they do, follow their instructions.** If you have questions, talk with your nurse or healthcare provider.

Clear liquid diet		
	OK to have	**Do not have**
Soups	• Clear broth, bouillon, and consommé.	• Anything with pieces of food or seasoning.
Sweets	• Gelatin, such as Jell-O®. • Flavored ices. • Hard candies, such as Life Savers®, lemon drops, and peppermints.	• All other sweets.

Drinks	• Clear fruit juices, such as lemonade, apple, cranberry, and grape juices. • Soda, such as ginger ale, 7UP®, Sprite®, and seltzer. • Sports drinks, such as Gatorade® and Powerade®. • Black coffee or plain tea without milk or creamer. • Water, including carbonated (fizzy) and flavored water. • Clear nutritional drinks, such as Boost® Breeze, Ensure Clear™, Pedialyte®, and Diabetishield®.	• Juices with pulp. • Nectars. • Smoothies or shakes. • Milk, cream, and other dairy products. • Nut milks, plant milks, non-dairy creamers, and other dairy alternatives. • Drinks with alcohol.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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