

Background:

A clear liquid diet consists of most liquids you can easily see through like water, broth and plain gelatin. These are liquid at body temperature, 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:

- To prepare for medical procedures, such as sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, some x-rays, or for surgery.
- If you have certain digestive problems, such as nausea, abdominal distention vomiting or diarrhea because clear liquids are easily absorbed by the body and reduce stimulation of the digestive system.
- To reintroduce foods following a period with no oral intake.

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, limeade or fruit punch
- Clear, fat-free broth (bouillon or consommé)
- Clear sodas (Ginger Ale, Sprite)
- Plain gelatin (Jell-O)
- Italian Ice
- Kool-Aid
- Honey
- Popsicles without bits of fruit or fruit pulp
- Tea or coffee without milk or cream
- Sports drinks

These **are NOT acceptable** clear liquids:

- Milk
- Tomato juice
- Fruit juices with pulp
- Fruit nectars

Sample Menu:

Breakfast: 8 AM	8 fl. oz. apple juice 8 fl. oz. coffee or tea with 2 tsp sugar 1 cup Jell-O
Snack: 10 AM	One bottle of Ensure Clear
Lunch: 12 PM	8 fl. oz. chicken broth 1/2 cup Italian ice 16 fl. oz. Gatorade
Snack: 2 PM	One bottle of Ensure Clear
Dinner: 5 PM	8 fl. oz. beef brother 8 fl. oz. ginger ale Two twin-pop freezer pops
Snack: 8 PM	One bottle of Ensure Clear

Contains 1295 calories, 2 grams fat, 2885 mg sodium, 285 grams carbohydrate, 167 grams sugar, 34 grams protein

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. Should abdominal cramps or discomfort persist while on a clear liquid diet, notify your physician immediately. To find a physician near you, please see our [locations page](#). To schedule an appointment with our Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, please call **(602) 422-9800**.