



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Full liquid diet

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Full liquid diet

A full liquid diet is made up only of fluids and foods that are normally liquid and foods that turn to liquid when they are at room temperature, like ice cream. It also includes:

- Strained creamy soups
- Tea
- Juice
- Jell-O
- Milkshakes
- Pudding
- Popsicles

You cannot eat solid foods when you are on a full liquid diet.

Why You May Need This Diet

You may need to be on a full liquid diet right before a medical test or procedure, or before certain kinds of surgery. It is important to follow the diet exactly to avoid problems with your procedure or surgery or your test results.

You also may need to be on a full liquid diet for a little while after you have had surgery on your stomach or intestine. You may also need to be on this diet if you are having trouble swallowing or chewing. If you are prescribed this diet for dysphagia (swallowing problems), your speech pathologist will give you more specific guidelines. Sometimes the full liquid diet is a step between a clear liquid diet to your regular diet.

What You Can Eat and Drink

You can eat or drink only things that are liquid. You may have these foods and drinks:

- Water

- Fruit juices, including nectars and juices with pulp
- Butter, margarine, oil, cream, custard, and pudding
- Plain ice cream, frozen yogurt, and sherbet
- Fruit ices and popsicles
- Sugar, honey, and syrups
- Soup broth (bouillon, consommé, and strained cream soups, but no solids)
- Sodas, such as ginger ale and Sprite
- Gelatin (Jell-O)
- Boost, Ensure, Resource, and other liquid supplements
- Tea or coffee with cream or milk and sugar or honey

Ask your doctor or dietitian if you can include these foods in your full liquid diet:

- Cooked, refined cereals, such as cream of rice, oatmeal, grits, or farina (Cream of Wheat)
- Strained meats, like the ones in baby food
- Potatoes pureed in soup

Do not eat any kind of cheese, fruit (fresh, frozen, or canned), meat, and cereals that are not on your "OK" list.

Also, do not eat raw or cooked vegetables. And, do not eat ice cream or other frozen desserts that have any solids in them or on top, such as nuts, chocolate chips, and cookie pieces.

Try having a mix of 5 to 7 of the foods you can eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Liquid foods do not include mashed foods, such as mashed potato or avocado.

Eating only a full liquid diet can give you enough energy, protein, and fat. But it does not give you enough fiber. Also, you may not get all the vitamins and minerals you need. So, your doctor may recommend that you take certain vitamins and supplements.

This diet is safe for people with diabetes, but only when they are followed closely by their doctor.

Adding More Calories

For most people on a full liquid diet, the goal is to get 1,350 to 1,500 calories and 45 grams of protein a day.

If you need to be on a full liquid diet for a long time, you will need to be under the care of a dietitian. Ask your doctor if you can eat these foods together to add calories:

- Nonfat dry milk added to your drinks
- Protein powders or liquid or powdered egg whites added to drinks
- Instant breakfast powder added to milk, puddings, custards, and milkshakes
- Strained meats (like the ones in baby food) added to broths
- Butter or margarine added to hot cereal and soups
- Sugar or syrup added to beverages

Alternative Names

Surgery - full liquid diet; Medical test - full liquid diet

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