Full Liquid Diet

Following a full liquid diet? Not sure where to start?

April 28, 2019 By Danielle Penick

Full liquid diets are often used as a stepping stone to assess for tolerance when advancing from a clear liquid diet to more solid foods after surgery, procedures, or when people are recovering from some gastrointestinal illnesses. Others may be advised to follow this diet if they have swallowing issues due to tumor locations, such as with some types of head and neck cancers. Unlike the clear liquid diet, the full liquid diet is able to better meet your nutrition goals by better providing adequate calories and protein using liquids only. However, if followed longer term, it may be inadequate in some vitamins, minerals, and nutrients like vitamin B12, vitamin A, iron, thiamine, and fiber. An added bonus, is this diet can actually make you feel full.

Similarly to the clear liquid diet, a full liquid diet allows for foods that are normally liquid or one's that turn into a liquid at room temperature. The main difference is that all liquids are allowed instead of only clear one's. There are some variations to a full liquid diet depending on the doctor your are seeing, the facility you are at, and your specific condition, so it is important to follow the diet exactly as prescribed for you. Not veering off the diet can result in avoiding problems after your procedures or surgeries and even prevent inaccurate test results. If you have any swallowing problems (called dysphagia) you should see a speech language pathologist for recommendations that are tailored to your specific anatomy and physiology.

Full liquid foods

Anything allowed on a clear liquid diet as I previously wrote about here. Other foods typically allowed on a full liquid diet are as follows:

Fruits

- All juice (without seeds or skin)
- Nectars (without seeds or skin)
- Pureed fruits that are diluted (without seeds or skin)

Vegetables

- Pureed veggies that are diluted (without skin and seeds)

- Mashed potatoes that are diluted in cream based soups

Soups

- Cream based soups (no chunks, pureed, strained)
- Broth based soups

Dairy

- All types of milk (whole, 2%, 1%, skim, or Lactaid)
- Milk substitutes (soy milk, almond milk, cashew milk, etc)
- Half and half
- Heavy cream
- Egg nog (pasteurized)
- Milkshakes (no seeds or skin or chunks)

Cereals

- Cream of wheat
- Cream of rice
- Pureed oatmeal

Deserts

- Puddings
- Custards
- Ice cream (without solids like nuts or cookie pieces)
- Sherbet

Miscellaneous

- Butter
- Mayonaise
- Nutrition supplement drinks like Boost, Ensure, Carnation Instant Breakfast, Muscle Milk, Orgain,

or Equate, etc.

- Honey
- Sugar
- Chocolate Syrup
- Salt
- Hard candy

Try consuming small frequent meals and snacks on this diet as too much diary or sugar intake in one sitting can be hard on the stomach. Nutrition supplement drinks can maximize your potential to meet your full calorie, protein, and vitamin and mineral needs. You can purchase these online, at your local CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, or even most local grocery stores. Purchasing them by the case may be cheaper if you anticipate being on this diet longer term. They taste much better when chilled in the fridge or served with ice, rather than at room temperature.

As with any diet recommendation, check with your team for more specific recommendations for you. Make sure to have a good understanding of how long you need to follow the diet and work with a registered dietitian for figuring out how many calories and grams of protein are recommended for you or if you need ideas for variety or recipes.

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