

Liquid Diet and Crohns Disease

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Leaflet provided by:

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What is the liquid (enteral / polymeric) diet?

A liquid diet consists of specially prescribed drinks that provide your body with all the energy, carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals it needs.

Liquid diets can also be called 'enteral nutrition'. Enteral nutrition means to provide nutrients or food to the gut. They can also be called 'polymeric' which means whole protein.

The regimen your dietitian will set you will meet your full nutritional requirements. No other diet should be eaten during this time.

What are the benefits of a liquid diet?

Treating Crohns disease with a liquid diet is helpful because it:

- can be used on its own or in combination with other medication to induce remission
- can help to reduce symptoms
- provides all the nutrition you need
- has no long term side-effects
- has fewer side-effects than other medication such as steroids
- may help the bowel lining to heal

Why have I been put on the liquid diet?

- You (or your consultant) may have decided that you do not want to go on steroids or other medications for your Crohns disease due to the side effects. For this reason the polymeric diet is often used in children with great success.

- Your consultant may have advised you to go on the polymeric diet as you have not tolerated other medications or other medications have been ineffective.
- You may have been advised to go on the polymeric diet whilst you are being established on a new medication or the dose of your medication has increased. It can also be used help wean you off steroids.

Is the liquid diet safe?

Yes. It is safer than any other treatment for Crohns disease. There are no risks of going on the polymeric diet if used as advised.

Am I allowed to eat and drink other fluids?

- It is good to drink water in addition to your liquid diet to prevent dehydration. This can be tap water, clear fluids or clear fizzy water.
- Having only weak, black tea or coffee should not affect your remission but you may experience looser stools after drinking these.
- You may also have jelly, ice lollies, clear boiled sweets and bovril.

Note: soup, milk, ice cream etc are **not** permitted.

How long would I need to be on a liquid diet for?

It is recommended you follow a liquid diet for at least 10 days to bring about remission. However, taking it for up to 8 weeks may be advised, to help the inflamed area of your gut heal completely. Your inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) team will monitor and review your progress as you follow your liquid diet and your dietitian will give you further information on what to expect.

How many of the supplement drinks do I need?

Your dietitian may increase the number of drinks you have over a 3 day period to meet your full nutritional requirements. This will be individualised and recorded on the regimen below.

Day	Name of supplement drink	Number per day	Additional fluid needed
1			
2			
3			

What if I don't like the drinks?

Please discuss this with your dietitian. There is a variety of different companies that make similar products. If you have tried various types and cannot manage the oral supplement drinks then you can have the equivalent via a tube that goes through your nose and into your stomach called a naso-gastric tube. This is only temporary.

What if I lose weight on the liquid diet?

Please contact your dietitian and they will advise you on what to do. Usually your dietitian will be aiming to maintain your current weight and in some circumstances will be aiming for weight gain. It is not an ideal time to be losing weight even if you are overweight when you start the liquid diet.

When will I start to feel better?

You should begin to feel better after about one week of a liquid diet. Your IBD team will review you regularly to check on your progress and advise how long you should follow this dietary intervention.

Where do I get the supplement drinks from?

Your dietitian will provide you with samples to get you started and then you will need to order further supplies via prescriptions provided by your GP or at the hospital.

How will I reintroduce food?

Your dietitian will provide you with information about when and how to reintroduce food. You may carry on taking a smaller amount of the enteral feed for a temporary period while you are reintroducing food.

Who will monitor me whilst I'm on the diet?

- Your dietitian will work with your IBD team to ensure that you are managing your feed. Your dietitian will monitor your weight to ensure that you are getting the right amount of nutrition and check if you have developed any side-effects.
- When you and your IBD team decide that you want to start enteral nutrition, your dietitian will work with you to try different oral feeds to test to find which ones work best for you. Your dietitian will also work out the number of drinks you need each day.
- You will receive regular contact to monitor how well you are managing the feed. If you are struggling with taste or side-effects, your dietitian may suggest different flavours or types of drink, or alternatively you may prefer to try tube feeding.

Contact details:

You can contact your dietitian _____ during the hours 8am - 4pm
Monday to Friday on 0151 529 3473. You will also be followed up in outpatient clinic.



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

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