

Clear Fluid Diet Before Colonoscopy

Patient handout

During the clear-fluid phase, do not eat any solid food. Choose a variety of fluids that you can see through to help prevent dehydration and allow the bowel preparation to work effectively. Follow the exact start and stop times on your main colonoscopy preparation sheet.



What counts as a clear fluid

- **Use the see through test.** A clear fluid may have colour, but you should be able to see through it when it is held up to the light.
- **Avoid red and purple.** These colours can resemble blood inside the bowel.
- **No milk cream or pulp.** If the drink is cloudy, thick, creamy or contains pieces, it is not a clear fluid.
- **No alcohol.** Alcohol can worsen dehydration and is not permitted during bowel preparation.

Clear fluid guide

Food group	Choose	Avoid
Water and electrolyte drinks	Water; clear flavoured water; pale yellow or light-coloured electrolyte or sports drinks; oral rehydration solution that is not red or purple.	Red or purple drinks; drinks containing fibre, pulp, chia or other particles; alcoholic beverages.
Juices and soft drinks	Pulp-free apple juice; white grape juice; white cranberry juice; pulp-free lemonade; ginger ale; lemon-lime soda; other clear or light-coloured soft drinks.	Orange or grapefruit juice; tomato or vegetable juice; any juice with pulp; red or purple juice; smoothies or blended drinks.
Tea and coffee	Plain tea; black coffee; sugar, honey or artificial sweetener may be added while fluids are permitted.	Milk; cream; dairy or non-dairy creamer; latte, cappuccino or any cloudy coffee or tea drink.

Clear fluid guide continued

Food group	Choose	Avoid
Broth and soup	Strained clear chicken, beef or vegetable broth; bouillon; clear consommé without particles.	Cream soup; unstrained soup; soup containing noodles, rice, meat, vegetables or other pieces.
Gelatin frozen treats and candy	Plain gelatin; ice pops or freezer bars without fruit, cream or pulp; clear hard candy. Choose pale colours only and stop at the time stated on your preparation sheet.	Red or purple gelatin, ice pops or candy; treats containing fruit pieces, seeds, milk or cream; ice cream or sherbet.
Nutrition drinks	A transparent clear nutrition drink without fibre may be used only if your preparation instructions specifically permit it.	Standard milk-like nutrition drinks, protein shakes, meal-replacement shakes or any opaque drink.

Stay hydrated

- Drink regularly while clear fluids are permitted. Do not rely on water alone.
- Alternate water with an electrolyte drink and clear broth to replace salt and provide some energy.
- Drink all of the additional clear fluid required with your bowel preparation. Frequent small amounts may be easier than large glasses.
- If you have heart failure, kidney disease or a prescribed fluid restriction, follow the individualized instructions from your healthcare team.

A simple clear fluid day

- **Morning.** Tea or black coffee, apple juice and water.
- **Midday.** Clear broth, a light-coloured electrolyte drink and gelatin that is not red or purple.
- **Afternoon and evening.** Continue alternating water, electrolyte drink, pale juice and broth while taking the bowel preparation as directed.

Stop at the instructed time. Your main preparation sheet tells you when all fluids must stop before the procedure. Eating solid food or drinking after that time may make the procedure unsafe or require it to be rescheduled.

Get help if needed. Call the office if you cannot keep fluids down, become very dizzy or faint, have severe weakness, or are unsure how these instructions apply to diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease or a fluid restriction.