

# Polymeric Diet

## Information for Patients

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### Crohn's disease

Crohn's disease is a condition that can cause inflammation of any part of the gut. It can go through phases of activity or inactivity (remission). It usually affects the lower part of the small bowel and the large bowel. It can affect the nutrients we absorb from the food we eat which can lead to weight loss, nutrient deficiency and tiredness.

### A liquid diet

A liquid diet is a treatment for Crohn's disease. You may also hear this diet called a polymeric diet or an Exclusive Enteral Nutrition Diet. The aim is to give you the nourishment you need whilst resting your gut. It is usually taken for a minimum of 2 weeks up to a maximum of 8 weeks. The diet involves drinking oral nutritional supplement drinks and these will provide all your protein, vitamin and mineral requirements. The dietitian will calculate your requirements. They will advise you how many of these drinks to take per day and which products are available. A lack of calories can make you feel hungry and lose weight so it is important to take all the supplements you are prescribed.

This diet may not be suitable during pregnancy. Please discuss this with your dietitian.

### Nutritional supplements

The products recommended for you are:

Product Name	Amount per day

The nutritional supplements do not have to be stored in the fridge but are best served chilled. They come in a range of flavours and it is best to drink them slowly. Some can be frozen and made into a slush and others can be gently warmed. Your dietitian can give you other helpful hints about taking your supplements. Always check the 'Use By' dates before drinking. Once opened, dispose of any unfinished supplements within 4 hours (or within 24 hours if they have been kept refrigerated).

Initial supplies of supplements may be provided by the hospital if you are started on the diet whilst in hospital. For future supplements at home, the dietitian can arrange for your GP to write a prescription which can then be taken to your pharmacy.

## Fluid

It is important when following this diet that you drink enough fluid to prevent becoming dehydrated. Symptoms of dehydration include tiredness, headaches or dark coloured urine.

You fluid requirement is:

## Additional permitted foods whilst on a polymeric diet

As the aim of the polymeric diet is gut rest, no other foods or drinks should be taken except:

- Water
- Black tea and coffee (e.g. no milk or milk alternative. Sugar or lemon can be added)
- Stock cubes/clear soup
- Clear jelly
- Juice ice lollies (no ice cream)
- Clear boiled sweets
- Wine gums or fruit pastilles
- Fruit squash
- A small amount of fruit juice (not tomato or any with 'bits' or fruit pulp) or a fizzy drink. No more than a small glass (e.g. 100mls per day).

## Side effects whilst following a polymeric diet

You may notice some side effects whilst following a polymeric diet. These side effects may be temporary. They can include: nausea, a change in consistency or colour of your stools, bad breath, headaches or feeling lightheaded.

If you have any ongoing problems or feel you cannot stick to the diet, please contact your dietitian.

## Food reintroduction

After the polymeric diet has been completed, you can begin to re-introduce food. It may feel strange to eat solid food again so it is best to re-introduce foods gradually. It will be easier to eat smaller meals and snacks than larger meals. Initially a low fibre diet is recommended and the dietitian can give you more information on returning to your normal diet.

Ideally you should be able to return to your full diet around 2 weeks after stopping the polymeric diet. You may continue to use some oral nutritional supplements during this time before going back to a full diet.

## Useful Information

**Dietitian:**

**Hospital:**

**Contact Number:**