

What is a chyle leak?

Chyle is a milky fluid made in the small intestine. It contains fat and other nutrients. The lymphatic system moves chyle into the blood stream to nourish the body.

A chyle leak can happen in the lymphatic system after surgery, trauma, or from a routine medical procedure. If the leak does not heal, it can cause damage.

Chyle leak nutrition therapy

Your health care team wants you to start nutrition therapy to remove fat from your diet. This will help heal your chyle leak. Most patients are on this diet for only a few weeks. Your health care team will tell you when you can start eating foods with fat again.

Reading food labels

It is important to read food labels while on the chyle leak diet. These labels show how much fat is in the food. Look for the fat content under the Nutrition Facts label on all canned, frozen, and prepared foods that you buy. On this diet, you can only eat the food if the “Total Fat” amount is 0g.

Sample label

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228 g)	
Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 200	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 4g	6%
Saturated Fat 1g	
Trans Fat 1g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1g	
Monounsaturated Fat 1g	

This food would **not** be allowed on the chyle leak (fat-free) diet.

Foods to use and avoid

The list on the following pages suggests some foods to use and some to avoid while on the chyle leak diet. Please ask your dietitian for more recommendations or if you have questions about a specific food or drink.

Points to remember

- This is a fat-free diet.
- Read food labels and make sure “Total Fat” is 0g.
- Your health care team will tell when you can eat foods with fat again.

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Food Group Examples	Use	Avoid
<p>Bread, starches, and grains</p>	<p>Air-popped popcorn (plain) Fat-free breads Fat-free crackers Fat-free cereals, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn Flakes • Frosted Flakes • Rice Krispies • Shredded Wheat • Special K • Puffed rice • Puffed wheat <p>Plain rice cakes White rice</p>	<p>Bagels Bread Hot dog and hamburger buns Corn chips, cheese puffs, potato chips, pretzels Cornbread Crackers Dinner or hard rolls English muffins French toast Granola Instant oatmeal, cream of wheat, and other cereals Muffins Packaged seasoned noodle or rice dishes Packaged stuffing Pancakes Pasta Pita bread Pretzels Corn or flour tortillas Waffles</p>
<p>Milk and dairy products</p>	<p>Nonfat or skim milk Nonfat yogurt Fat-free hot chocolate Fat-free cottage cheese</p>	<p>Cheese Chocolate milk Cottage cheese Eggnog Hot chocolate Milk – 1%, 2%, or whole Ice cream Rice milk Soy milk Yogurt</p>

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Food Group Examples	Use	Avoid
Meats and proteins	Beans, boiled Beans, canned fat free Egg substitutes, fat free Egg whites	Bacon Baked or flavored beans Beef Bologna Chicken Corned beef Egg yolks Fish Ham Hot dogs Jerky Luncheon meats Meats and poultry, canned Nuts Peanut butter, creamy or chunky Pork Refried beans Turkey Sausage
Vegetables	All fresh, raw, frozen, and canned vegetables and juices marked “no fat” on the label	None
Fruits	All fresh, raw, frozen, and canned fruits and juices marked “no fat” on the label	Avocados Coconut Olives
Desserts	Fat-free pudding Fat-free whipped cream Gumdrops Hard candy Jelly beans Jell-O Marshmallows Popsicles	Cake Chocolate Cookies Danish Doughnuts Ice cream Milkshakes Pie Pudding

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Food Group Examples	Use	Avoid
Supplements	Boost Breeze Carnation Breakfast Essentials (vanilla and strawberry flavors only) Ensure Clear Fat-free protein powder	Boost Carnation Breakfast Essentials (chocolate flavor) Ensure Glucerna Generic brand supplement drinks
Beverages	Coffee Crystal Light Juice and juice drinks Kool-Aid Soda pop Sports drinks Tea (hot or iced) Water (plain or flavored)	Coffee specialty drinks
Miscellaneous	Fat-free salad dressings Fat-free mayonnaise Herbs and spices Honey Imitation butter spray Jelly Ketchup Mustard Pickle relish Salsa (no oil) Sugar	Butter Cream sauces Dips Gravies Margarine Mayonnaise Salad dressings Sandwich spreads