

Fat Free Diet for Management of Chylothorax or Chyle Leak

Chyle is a mixture of lymph and (emulsified) fat that travels through the lymphatic system. It has a high content of triglycerides, which gives it a milky appearance.

Food Group	Allowed Foods	Notes
Breads, Cereals, Rice, Pasta	Cream of wheat and cream of rice cereal; Plain white rice; Fat free rice cakes	No crackers; No baked goods; No granola
Fruits	Fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits; Fruit Juices	No fried fruit; No avocado
Vegetables	Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables; Salad	No fried vegetables, butter, cheese or cream sauce
Protein foods	Tuna in water, white fish cooked in water or fat-free vegetable broth; Egg whites, egg substitute; Fat free tofu; Clear liquid, fat free, high protein nutrition beverage	No beef, pork, chicken, turkey, ham, fatty fish (such as salmon/lox, sardines, herring); No tuna in oil
Milk, yogurt, cheese	Fat-free yogurt or fat-free frozen yogurt; Skim milk, fat-free rice or soy milk; Fat-free cheese	Check all labels for fat content
Snacks, sweets, condiments, beverages	Fat free vegetable broth; Fruit ice, Jello®; Angel food cake; Honey, jam, jelly; BBQ sauce; Fat-free salad dressing, fat-free mayonnaise, fat free salsa; Pickles, soy sauce, hot sauce	Check all labels for fat content

Chylothorax, or **chyle leak**, is caused by an injury somewhere along the thoracic duct, which runs from the diaphragm to the neck and is the largest lymphatic vessel in the body. Malignancy (cancer) of the head and neck area is the most common cause of chylothorax. It may also occur as a complication of neck or thoracic surgery, cardiac surgery, infectious disease, or a lymphatic malformation that has been present since birth.

Your physician may repair the leak surgically or watch to see if it heals on its own. Treatment may include bowel rest, meaning no eating. During this time, you are given total parenteral nutrition (TPN) - nutrition through an IV line.

Your physician will decide the appropriate oral diet for you. You may not be allowed to eat, as consuming any sources of fat will prevent the leak from resolving. Alternatively, you may be prescribed a very low fat diet. This temporary diet helps to limit the leakage of chyle by eliminating nearly all fats, which contain long chain triglycerides, from your diet. Following this diet may lead to an earlier spontaneous closure of the leak.

If your physician prescribes a very low fat diet, it is important to meet with your dietitian. You will review the guidelines so you can confidently avoid dietary fat while getting needed calories and protein. Consider a fat-free clear liquid nutritional beverage for calories and protein. Talk with your dietitian about other foods that fit your low fat meal plan.

Sample Menu

BREAKFAST	SNACK
Orange juice (8 oz)	2 fat free rice cakes
1 cup cream of wheat with 1 tbsp brown sugar	1 cup fruit salad
1/4 cup fat free egg substitute or 2 egg whites	12 oz skim milk
12 oz skim milk	
Coffee with 1 tbsp sugar or tea w/ 1 tbsp honey	
<i>550 calories, 25 grams protein</i>	<i>365 calories, 16 grams protein</i>

LUNCH

6 oz fat free vegetable broth
3 oz tuna w/ 2 tbsp fat-free raspberry vinaigrette on chopped tomato and lettuce
1 cup fat free frozen yogurt with ½ cup cherry pie filling
12 oz skim milk
540 calories, 39 grams protein

SNACK: Baked apple with 1 tbsp brown sugar *120 calories*

DINNER

4 oz fat free white fish cooked in vegetable broth
1 cup white rice with ½ cup salsa
1 cup steamed broccoli
425 calories, 38 grams protein

Day Total: 2000 calories, 118 grams protein

If you have any questions, please call the Dietitian Office at Roswell Park, 716-845-2398.