



Low Fat Diet after Cardiac Surgery With or Without Chyle Leak

What is chyle?

Chyle (sounds like kyle) is a milky white fluid that contains protein, fat, cholesterol, lymphocytes, and electrolytes. It is made in the small intestine during digestion and then goes through the lymphatic system into the blood stream.

What is a chyle leak?

If there is a chyle leak, the chyle builds up between the lung and the chest wall. It will put pressure on the lungs and makes breathing more difficult. The leak may happen after an injury, after surgery to the chest or neck, or after the completion of a Fontan surgery.

How can a low fat diet help?

When fat is reduced in the diet, the body makes less chyle and therefore there is less fluid that can leak. The leak may heal and stop the problem. Sometimes the low fat diet is also ordered after the Fontan surgery to try to prevent a chyle leak. Your child may have to follow a low fat diet for 6- 8 weeks or as directed by your doctor. **The goal is to eat as little fat as possible.** Your child should eat and drink only fat free or very low fat foods and beverages. The small amount of fat allowed in the diet should not be eaten in one serving. Try to spread the fat in the diet out over the day.

If this diet helps your child's condition, your doctor will tell you when fat can be added back in the diet.

Helpful Hints

- Consider a fat free nutritional supplement (eg. Resource Breeze) if your child is not getting enough calories and/or protein from foods.
- Fat free foods are those where the total fat on the product's Nutrition Facts label is 0 to 0.5 grams of fat per serving.
- Read all food labels for fat content.
- Avoid using fat when cooking and preparing foods. Trim fat from meats and bake, steam or broil as a cooking method. Choose very low fat meats and do not add butter, margarine or oils for cooking.
- Not all healthy foods are fat free.

List of Foods

Food Group	Recommended	Avoid
Milk and Milk Products	Fat free milk Evaporated skim milk Non-fat dry milk powder Fat free processed cheese slices Fat free sour cream Fat free cottage cheese Fat free cream cheese Fat free pudding Fat free Carnation Instant Breakfast	Dairy products such as milk and yogurt with more than 1% milk fat Regular or low fat cheese Regular or low fat cream cheese Regular or low fat cottage cheese Cheez Whiz

Food Group	Recommended	Avoid
Meats and Protein Alternatives	Lean white fish Skinless chicken or skinless turkey breast Beans and legumes Fat free hot dogs Tuna packed in water Fat-free deli meats Egg whites or fat free egg substitutes such as Egg Beaters Fat free vegetable burgers	Peanut butter and other nut butters Fried and battered meats and poultry Egg yolks Beef, pork and fatty fish Seafood such as shrimp, scallops, and lobster Shellfish such as clams, mussels, and oysters

Food Group	Recommended	Avoid
Breads, Cereals and Starches	Bread, buns, plain bagels, and pita bread Fat free crackers, rice cakes, muffins Plain pasta Plain rice Melba toast Cereals with less than 1 gram of total fat per serving White potatoes, yams or sweet potatoes Plain, air-popped popcorn	Cheese and egg breads, buns, bagels, and croissants Pasta stuffed with meat or cheese, such as ravioli or tortellini Egg noodles or fried rice Packaged noodle dishes Crackers Granola

Food Group	Recommended	Avoid
Vegetables and Fruit	Plain, fresh, frozen or canned vegetables Vegetable and fruit juices Apple and fruit sauces Pasta sauce with less than 1 gram of total fat per serving Jelly and fruit spreads Raisins or other fat free dried fruits	Avocado Olives Coconut Canned fruit pie filling Avoid any vegetables with butter, cream sauce, cheese sauce or fried

Food Group	Recommended	Avoid
Snacks/Treats/Desserts	Rice cakes without chocolate , cheese or butter Fat-free granola bars Fat-free cookies Sorbet, popsicles and fruit ices Fat-free pudding Fat-free ice cream or frozen yogurt Hard candy, jelly beans, gummy candies and gum Jell-O and fruit gels Fat-free chocolate, strawberry, and maple syrups	Pastries Cakes Ice cream with fat Doughnuts Snack type chips Nuts and Seeds Muffins Regular popcorn Caramel Toffee Fudge Chocolate

Food Group	Recommended	Avoid
Oils, spreads, and other foods	Fat free salad dressings Fat free mayonnaise Yellow mustard Barbeque sauce Hot sauce Soy sauce Herbs and Spices Maple syrup Sugar Fat-free broths and soups Salsa Jams and jellies Honey (for children older than 1 year) Pickles Fat-free croutons	Butter Margarine Oil Regular mayonnaise Soups and cream soups

Additional Information:

If you have questions, call: _____, Registered Dietitian

Phone: (717) 531- _____ or (717) 531-8406