



<b>Title</b>	<b>Pre-operative fasting guidelines: elective procedures – summary guideline</b>
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<b>Prepared by</b>	
<b>Developed by</b>	<b>Dr D Love FRCA, Consultant in Anaesthesia</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Impact Assessed</b>	

Fasting guidelines	
Ingested material	Minimum fasting time*
Clear liquids <sup>1</sup>	2 hours
Breast milk	4 hours
Infant formula "milk"	6 hours
Non-human milk <sup>2</sup>	6 hours
Light meal <sup>3</sup>	6 hours
Alcohol containing drinks <sup>4</sup>	24 hours

\* these fasting times apply to all ages

<sup>1</sup> Clear liquids include: water, carbonated (fizzy) drinks, tea without milk, coffee without milk

Non-clear fresh fruit juice containing pulp (e.g. fresh orange juice) should be avoided within 6 hours of surgery. Newsprint should be visible through a glass of the liquid.

Clear jellies without fruit pieces leave no residue in the stomach and may be considered as clear liquids. These may be useful in paediatric practice.

It is safe for patients (including diabetics) to drink carbohydrate rich drinks (specifically developed for peri-operative use) up to two hours before elective surgery.

<sup>2</sup> Non-human milk and milk-containing drinks become semi-solid in the stomach and should be considered as solids. If any milk is added to tea or coffee the appropriate fasting time is extended to 6 hours.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of a light meal include:-

- A small bowl of cereal (e.g. Rice Krispies or Cornflakes) with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk. **No high fibre cereals such as Weetabix, muesli, bran, etc.**
- A slice of white toast with honey, jam, syrup, or marmite but **no butter.**

Meals including fried or fatty food or meat prolong gastric emptying time.

<sup>4</sup> Alcohol increases gastric emptying time.

**In all cases it is up to the discretion of the individual anaesthetist as to whether surgery should proceed or not, or whether a patient's required fasting time may be shortened.**

- Unless instructed otherwise for surgical reasons, patients should eat normally the day before surgery but avoid large or fatty meals. Fat or dietary fibre remains in the stomach longer than other foods.
- Chewing gum does not increase gastric volume but it should be avoided as it may be swallowed inadvertently. Patients should not have their operation cancelled or delayed just because they are chewing gum or sucking a boiled sweet immediately prior to induction of anaesthesia.

### Prescribed medication

- Unless otherwise specified, this may be taken within the 2 hours prior to surgery with a small drink of water (< 30ml).
- Analgesic drugs should not normally be omitted due to fasting as pain can prolong gastric emptying times.