

FASTING BEFORE SURGERY

6
HOURS

Stop solid food and non-clear fluids **at least 6 hours before your surgery.**



In most cases, you may sip small amounts of clear liquids, if thirsty, before you're taken to the operating theatre.



Tell your anaesthetist in advance what medications you take, including any weight loss medications or peptides.



Always follow the specific instructions of your anaesthetist, especially for babies and children.

WHAT IS PRE-SURGERY FASTING?

Pre-surgery fasting means you need to stop eating and drinking for specific periods before a surgical procedure or operation involving general anaesthesia or intravenous (IV) sedation.

WHY DO I NEED TO FAST BEFORE SURGERY?

When you have general anaesthesia or IV sedation, your body's natural reflexes, such as coughing, are switched off. If food or other solids are still in your stomach, they can travel up into your throat and into your lungs while you are under anaesthesia or sedation. **This can cause life-threatening breathing problems.**

Eating solid food and drinking non-clear fluids too close to the time of your operation may result in your surgery being delayed.

HOW LONG BEFORE SURGERY DO I NEED TO STOP EATING AND DRINKING?

You need to **stop all solid food and non-clear fluids** such as milk and most fruit juices **at least 6 hours** before any elective surgical procedure involving general anaesthesia or IV sedation.

In most cases, guidelines allow you to drink small amounts of clear liquids if thirsty, such as water or clear apple juice, up until the time you're taken into the operating theatre. This is called 'Sip Til Send'.

If you have **diabetes, reflux, or take GLP-1 weight loss medications or peptides**, you must discuss this with your anaesthetist in advance, as the fasting rules may be different for you.

WHAT CAN I DRINK WHILE I'M FASTING?

Adults, and children who weigh over 65kg, can drink **up to 200mL of clear liquids per hour if thirsty**, up until you're taken into the operating theatre.

Children aged 16 years and under (weighing 65kg or less) can drink up to **3mL/kg per hour of clear liquids if thirsty**, up to 1 hour before surgery. If children weigh over 65kg, follow adult guidelines.

Babies aged under 12 months may have formula up to 4 hours before surgery, and breast milk up to 3 hours before surgery.

The following are considered **clear liquids**:

- Water
- Pulp-free clear fruit juice (e.g. apple juice) or clear cordial
- Black coffee, black or green tea (in moderation)
- Clear carbohydrate-containing liquids (e.g. Hydralyte™)
- Clear liquid ice blocks.

WHAT CAN'T I DRINK WHILE I'M FASTING?

Avoid drinking non-clear fluids within 6 hours of your operation.

The following are considered **non-clear fluids**:

- Milk* and cream (including in tea or coffee)
- Non-dairy whiteners such as almond, soy, or oat milk
- Soluble fibre
- Broths
- Jelly.

*Breast milk can be given up to 3 hours before surgery. Formula or other milk products can be given up to 4 hours before surgery for babies aged under 12 months and 6 hours before for children aged 12 months and over.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO PRE-SURGERY DIET AND FASTING

Four weeks before your surgery

Eat a healthy, balanced diet (vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins). Lean proteins may be animal-based (fish, chicken) or plant-based (beans). Limit your alcohol consumption.

The day before your surgery

With exceptions, specified by your anaesthetist, you can eat and drink normally on the day before your surgery. On the evening before your surgery, avoid large or fatty meals and drinks containing alcohol. Your anaesthetist may give you other advice based on your circumstances. Always follow the specific instructions from your anaesthetist.

GLP-1 diabetic and weight loss medications, and peptides, slow the stomach emptying. You should continue using them, but you must let your health professional know if you are using Ozempic®, Wegovy®, Mounjaro®, Trulicity®, Victoza®, Saxenda®, retatrutide (reta), R-10, R-20.

On the day of your surgery

Your anaesthetist will give you a specific time to stop eating and specific instructions about drinking. Avoid drinks containing alcohol.

‘Sip Til Send’ guidance has been adopted in Australia and New Zealand. Find it at www.safetyandquality.gov.au/resources/patient-information-leaflet-sip-til-send.

Generally, the rules are:

- **Stop solid foods at least 6 hours before surgery.** Follow ‘Sip Til Send’ guidance until your procedure.
- Adults, and children aged over 16 years and children weighing over 65kg may sip up to half a cup of clear liquids per hour, until being taken into the operating theatre, if thirsty.
- Children aged 16 years and under and weighing under 65kg may sip clear liquids up to 3mL/kg per hour up to 1 hour before surgery, if thirsty.
- Babies aged under 12 months may have breastmilk up to 3 hours before surgery, and sip clear liquids up to 1 hour before surgery, or as advised.



IMPORTANT ADVICE FOR USERS OF GLP-1 WEIGHT LOSS MEDICATIONS OR PEPTIDE PRODUCTS FOR WEIGHT LOSS

You **must** notify your anaesthetist or the hospital pre-admission clinic as soon as possible if you use any GLP-1 diabetic or weight loss medications, including Ozempic®, Wegovy®, Mounjaro®, Trulicity®, Victoza®, Saxenda®.

You **must** also tell your anaesthetist or the hospital pre-admission clinic if you use peptide products for weight loss, in particular products that are labelled: retatrutide (reta), R-10, R-20. GLP-1 medications and some weight loss peptides (eg retatrutide) slow down your digestion and may delay your stomach from emptying. Follow the specific directions of your anaesthetist.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- **Don't wait:** Tell your procedural team about all the medications that you are taking. GLP-1 weight loss medications and peptides may slow your stomach from emptying.
- **Follow specific advice:** You may be asked to follow a “clear fluid only” diet for 24 hours before your operation.
- **Be precise:** Know the date and time of your last dose/injection.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FASTING AND GLP-1 WEIGHT LOSS MEDICATIONS

The college has developed a patient information sheet and form for patients taking GLP-1 weight loss medication.



Scan the QR code for more information or visit: www.anzca.edu.au/feeding

Please note: This resource has been developed for patients by specialist anaesthetists of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. This information should not replace information supplied by your doctor. If you have any questions about your anaesthesia, please speak with your treating specialist.