

Fasting Guidelines

Regardless of the type of surgery, we require all patients to fast for a specific period of time before receiving surgery. Fasting guidelines are important to follow. Failure to follow these guidelines can lead to aspiration, the inhalation of stomach contents into the lungs. To ensure this is avoided, please make sure your stomach is empty.

The recommendations below are set by the American Society of Anesthesiologists for NPO status. These recommendations below apply to healthy patients who will undergo an elective procedure*. These guidelines are not intended for women in labor. If you have any special needs, please consult with the perioperative clinic to see what options may be available.

Adults

The number of hours a patient must fast before being taken to the operating room is:

- 8 hours for a normal meal
- 6 hours for a light meal (i.e. toast or clear liquids)
- 2 hours for clear liquids (i.e. water, fruit juice without pulp, clear tea, black coffee)

Patients should not consume candy or chewing gum within 6 hours of arriving for an operation.

Children and Infants

The number of hours a patient must fast before being taken to the operating room is:

- 6 hours for solids and infant formula
- 4 hours for breast milk
- 2 hours for clear liquids (i.e. water, fruit juice without pulp, clear tea, black coffee)

Patients should not consume candy or chewing gum within 6 hours of arriving for an operation.

*Patients whose procedures are of an urgent nature, or have been added to the day's existing schedule, should fast for a minimum of 6 hours prior to the scheduled time of procedure for light meals and 2 hours for clear liquids. Patients will not be taken into the operating room until these time-based criteria are met. No exceptions.