

Preoperative Fasting Guidelines

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1. Quick Reference Fasting Recommendations

Ingested Material	Minimum fast for elective procedures
Prescribed medication	Administer (with water) even within the fasting period
Clear fluids	2 hours
Chewing gum	Discard prior to anaesthesia- do not swallow
Breast milk	4 hours
Light meal, infant formula or milk	6 hours
Enteral feed	6 hours

2. Overview

Preamble

This guideline is meant to assist in the management of preoperative fasting in patients requiring anaesthesia. Although it addresses most situations, it does not replace clinical judgement. The treating Anaesthetist may make a decision that reflects best care in an individual patient given specific circumstances. These fasting guidelines are based on gastric physiology, available evidence and Waitematā DHB Anaesthetists' opinions.

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Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to (1) outline the best practice for preoperative fasting at Waitematā District Health Board (2) enhance the quality of and efficiency of anaesthesia care (3) reduce the severity of complications related to perioperative pulmonary aspiration of gastric contents and (4) increase patient satisfaction.

Scope

This guideline is intended for the use of all Waitematā District Health Board employees who advise or care for patients who receive anaesthesia care. Anaesthesia care during procedures refers to general anaesthesia, regional anaesthesia, or sedation/analgesia. Throughout this guideline, 'preoperative' should be considered synonymous with 'procedural', as the latter term is often used to describe procedures that are not considered operations.

3. Introduction

Pulmonary aspiration of gastric or oropharyngeal contents during anaesthesia is a rare event, but one with significant morbidity and mortality. Fasting guidelines for patients having anaesthesia attempt to reduce the risk of aspiration and the severity of the pulmonary effects should aspiration occur.

Pre-anaesthesia fasting guidelines apply to any procedure performed under general anaesthesia, regional anaesthesia, or sedation/analgesia. Aspiration may occur during all types of anaesthesia in non-fasted patients, because anaesthetic and sedative medication reduce or eliminate airway protective reflexes that normally prevent regurgitated gastric contents from entering the lungs.

4. Fasting Recommendations

It is mandatory that the oral intake of liquid and solids is restricted prior to anaesthesia- thus minimising gastric volume at the time of surgery. Gastric emptying between liquids and solids is variable, therefore different fasting times apply.

4.1. Solids

Patients must not consume food or milk containing drinks within 6 hours of elective procedures requiring anaesthesia or sedation. It is recommended that the last meal prior to surgery is a light meal.

 **Do not eat within six hours of surgery**

Do not eat within six hours of surgery

4.2. Enteral feeding – NG, NJ, PEG, PEJ

Gastric tube feeds should be stopped six hours before elective procedures requiring anaesthesia or sedation. In some circumstances, patients with nasojejunal (NJ) and percutaneous endoscopic jejunostomy (PEJ) tubes that are placed post pyloric may have feeds continued to the time of non-abdominal surgery. Please seek advice from the procedural Anaesthetist.

 Fasting arrangements in the ICU patient are different and will need to be discussed on the day of

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surgery between the Anaesthetist and Intensivist.

4.3. Clear fluids

Encourage drinking **clear** fluids until two hours prior to surgery, requiring anaesthesia or sedation. **The following are allowed:** water, black coffee, black tea, cordial, fizzy drinks, pulp-free fruit juice, carbohydrate drinks e.g. powerade/ nutricia

Morning Operation: List starts at **08:30am**

Please fast from **02:00am** for food or milk and continue clear fluids **until 06:00am**.

Up to 300mls /1 mug of clear fluid can be consumed just before 06:00am

Afternoon Operation: List starts at **13:30pm**

Please fast from **07:00am** for food or milk and continue clear fluids **until 11:00am** (list often starts early)

Up to 300mls /1 mug of clear fluid can be consumed just before 11:00



Do not drink within two hours of surgery

4.4. Other fluids – e.g. milk or pulpy fruit juices

Patients may **not** drink non-clear fluids within six hours of elective procedures requiring anaesthesia or sedation.

4.5. Medications

Unless directed otherwise, continue prescribed medications on the day of surgery.

These can be taken with a sip of water, even within two hours of surgery.

Patients should take routine medications on the morning of surgery with water or a clear liquid, ideally several hours prior to the scheduled surgery. Essential medications that must be taken within two hours of surgery may include inadvertently omitted medications, medications on a critical schedule or medications given as part of the anaesthetic plan; these should be taken with a sip of water.

4.6. Chewing gum

Patients should be instructed to dispose of chewing gum prior to surgery.

If the patient has swallowed a piece of chewing gum the procedural anaesthetist must be informed.

5. Paediatric Patients

Recommendations for fasting in the paediatric population have recently been revised. There are additional guidelines for intake of breast milk and infant formula.

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Children should be permitted intake of infant formula until six hours prior to surgery and breast milk until four hours prior to surgery.

Hypoglycaemia and hypovolemia are particular concerns when children are fasted, especially infants. Thus the intake of clear fluids, including boxed juices should be encouraged up until **one hour** prior to surgery for children.

Morning Operation: List starts at **08:30am**

Please fast from **02:30am** for food or milk and continue clear fluids **until 07:30am**

Afternoon Operation: List starts at **13:30pm**

Please fast from **07:30am** for food or milk and continue clear fluids **until 12:30pm**

Ensure no chocolate or lollies are consumed within 6 hours of anaesthesia.

6. Emergency Surgical Patients

Adults and children undergoing emergency surgery should follow the recommended normal fasting guidelines. Mandatory preoperative fasting in emergency cases depends on the patients acuity, if the case is urgent please discuss with the coordinating anaesthetist who will advise if preoperative fasting is appropriate.



Urgent refers to:

- 1) **Immediate** life, limb or organ saving intervention
 - Normally within minutes of decision to operate
- 2) **Urgent** intervention for acute onset or clinical deterioration of potentially life threatening conditions
 - Normally within hours of decision to operate

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Appendix: Patient Preoperative Fasting Information

Patients on a morning list

Morning Operation: List starts at 08:30 am

Please have nothing to eat from 02:00 am. This includes any food, sweets, milky drinks and juice with pulp.

You can drink clear fluids between the hours of 02:00 am & 06:00am. Up to 300mls /1 mug of clear fluid can be consumed just before 06:00 AM

Examples of clear fluids are those fluids which, when held to the light, are transparent. They include glucose-based drinks, cordials and clear juices. They do not include particulate or milk-based products.

Patients on an all-day list

Please have nothing to eat from 02:00am.This includes any food, milky drinks or juice with pulp.

You can drink clear fluids between the hours of 02:00am & 06:00am. Up to 300mls /1 mug of clear fluid can be consumed just before 06:00

Examples of clear fluids are those fluids which, when held to the light, are transparent. They include water, black tea or black coffee, glucose-based drinks, cordials and clear juices. They do not include milk-based products or juices with pulp.

 **Once surgeon has identified list order, those who are listed on the afternoon schedule may continue to drink clear fluids up until two hours before induction of anaesthesia, nursing staff to confirm with procedural anaesthetist.**

Patients on an afternoon list

Afternoon Operation: List starts at 13:30pm

You can have a light breakfast such as cereal or toast and a hot drink with added milk.

Please have nothing to eat from 07:00am.This includes any food, sweets, milky drinks and juice with pulp.

Clear fluids can be continued up until 11:00am

Up to 300mls /1 standard size mug of clear fluid can be consumed just before 11:00 am.

Examples of clear fluids are those fluids which, when held to the light, are transparent. They include water, black tea or black coffee, glucose-based drinks, cordials and clear juices. They do not include milk-based products or juices with pulp.

You will have been advised when to start fasting before arrival to the surgical unit. Please follow these instructions or your surgery may be cancelled.

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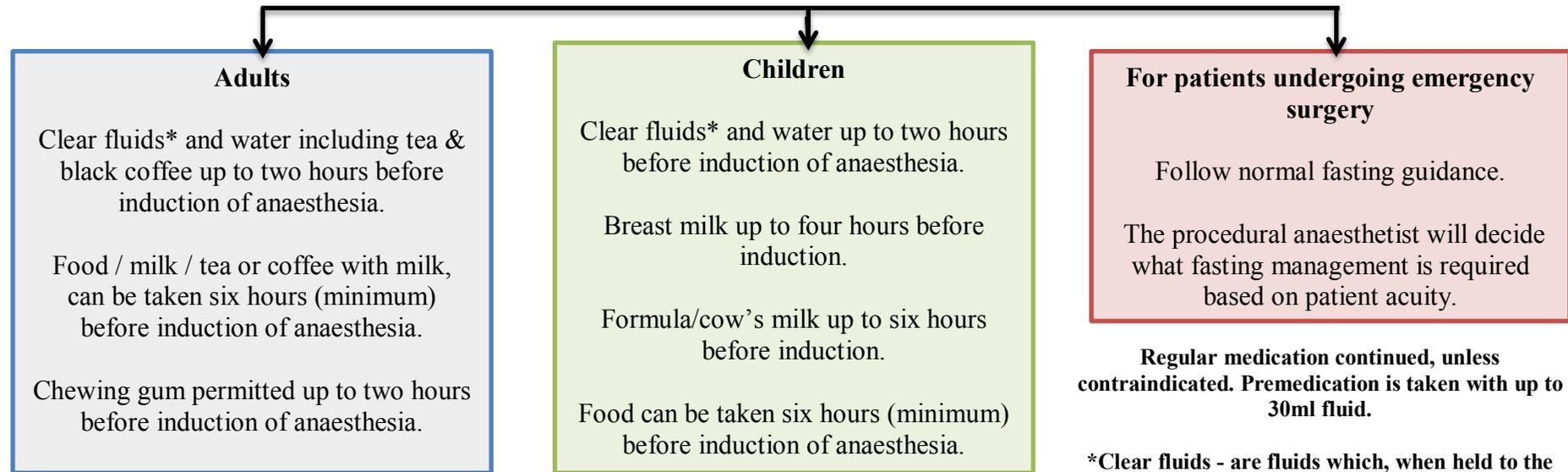
Patients present for elective or emergency surgery



Information provided on fasting regime



Clear signage for each patient, indicating fasting regime
recorded in the MDT notes and clearly visible in the patients bedspace



Adults

Clear fluids* and water including tea & black coffee up to two hours before induction of anaesthesia.

Food / milk / tea or coffee with milk, can be taken six hours (minimum) before induction of anaesthesia.

Chewing gum permitted up to two hours before induction of anaesthesia.

Children

Clear fluids* and water up to two hours before induction of anaesthesia.

Breast milk up to four hours before induction.

Formula/cow's milk up to six hours before induction.

Food can be taken six hours (minimum) before induction of anaesthesia.

For patients undergoing emergency surgery

Follow normal fasting guidance.

The procedural anaesthetist will decide what fasting management is required based on patient acuity.

Regular medication continued, unless contraindicated. Premedication is taken with up to 30ml fluid.

***Clear fluids - are fluids which, when held to the light, are transparent. They include glucose-based drinks cordials and clear juices. They do not include particulate or milk-based products.**

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