

PRE-OP GUIDANCE

Fasting before your surgery

Fasting means not eating or drinking for a set time before your anaesthetic. It lowers the risk of stomach contents entering your lungs during anaesthesia.

Your hospital will give you exact fasting times - always follow those. Times can differ depending on your operation, your health and the time of your surgery. The guide below is general only; if your hospital's instructions differ, follow the hospital.

A general guide for adults

6 hours before	Stop eating solid food , and stop milk or drinks containing milk (such as coffee with milk). A light meal is fine up to this point unless told otherwise.
2 hours before	Stop clear fluids. Until 2 hours before, you may have small amounts of clear fluids - water, clear cordial, pulp-free apple juice, or black tea/coffee (no milk).
Before you leave	If your hospital allows, a few sips of water to take essential medicines is usually fine - check with them first.

What counts as a clear fluid?

A clear fluid is one you can see through. **Yes:** water, clear cordial, black tea or coffee (no milk), pulp-free clear apple juice. **No:** milk, milky tea or coffee, smoothies, juice with pulp, fizzy drinks (unless your hospital allows), alcohol.

Your usual medicines

Keep taking your regular medicines as normal unless told otherwise. Some medicines (for example certain diabetes or blood-thinning medicines) may need adjusting before surgery. If unsure, ask the hospital, your surgeon or your GP - do not stop important medicines without advice.

Other things to avoid

- No chewing gum or lollies inside the fasting window - they count as eating.
- No smoking or vaping on the day before surgery if you can avoid it.
- Do not drink alcohol the night before or the day of surgery.

If you accidentally eat or drink inside your fasting window, do not just turn up - tell the hospital as soon as you can. Your surgery may need to be delayed for your safety.