

Fasting

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ENT North

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Fasting (not eating or drinking) is essential prior to sedation or a general anaesthesia. Fasting reduces the risk of regurgitating the contents of the stomach, which, if it occurs, may lead to damage to the lungs by the stomach acid. Some people may have medical conditions, which require specific or different instructions, and, if this applies to you, these instructions will be given to you by your doctor. Each hospital has its own instructions that you should follow.

The following fasting guidelines are recommended by ANZCA (Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists):

- For adults having an elective procedure, limited non-fatty solid food may be taken up to six hours prior to anaesthesia. In most circumstances, patients are encouraged to drink clear fluids for up to two hours prior to anaesthesia. Clear fluids are water, pulp free fruit juice, clear cordial, black tea and coffee. Cloudy or milk based drinks or alcohol are not to be taken.
- For children over six months of age having an elective procedure, breast milk or formula and limited solid food may be given up to six hours and clear fluids are encouraged up to two hours prior to anaesthesia.
- For infants under six months of age having an elective procedure, formula may be given up to four hours, breast milk up to three hours and clear fluids up to two hours prior to anaesthesia.
- Prescribed medications may be taken with a sip of water less than two hours prior to anaesthesia unless otherwise directed.
- Chewing gum must be discarded.

Always follow your anaesthetist's specific instructions when they are different to those above.