

BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

Eating & Drinking

A simple guide to the fasting rules – what to stop, when, and what to do if you slip up.

8 hrs**No solid food**

Stop all food this long before surgery.

2 hrs**Clear liquids are fine**

Up until this long before surgery.

Meals, snacks, candy, and gum – counts as solid food - stop at the solid-food cutoff.

Why it matters

Anesthesia switches off the reflex that keeps food and liquid out of your lungs. An empty stomach prevents **aspiration** – stomach contents entering the lungs – which can cause serious pneumonia. A safety rule, not a formality.

Clear liquids

Clear – OK. water, apple juice, black coffee, tea without milk. You can see through it.

Not clear – counts as food. Milk, cream, orange juice, smoothies, anything with pulp.

Medications

Take **only** what your team approved, with a small sip of water.

Never stop or start a medication on your own. Your team coordinates it.

Ask your team about**Insulin / diabetes meds**

Dosing changes when fasting – they'll tell you what to take or hold.

GLP-1 (Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro)

Can slow stomach emptying and raise aspiration risk - tell your team well before surgery; they will tell you whether to hold it and for how long.

Blood thinners (Eliquis, warfarin, Plavix)

Hold timing is coordinated by your physicians – don't stop on your own.

Reflux, pregnancy, or a child

Different guidance may apply – ask for specific instructions.

If you slip up

Tell your team right away. Don't hide it. Honesty usually means a short delay, not a cancellation, and it lets us keep you safe. Call your facility's care team.

Questions? Call your surgical & anesthesia team

Your facility's care team

Your Surgery Center · Patient education for surgery.
Educational information only, not personal medical advice.
Always follow the specific instructions from your care team.