



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Day Case Unit, Horton General Hospital

Fasting before a general anaesthetic

8.00am instructions

Information for patients



What this leaflet is about

This leaflet tells you about not eating or drinking (fasting) before a general anaesthetic. It also tells you what to bring with you when you come into hospital.

Fasting from food or drink is sometimes called 'nil by mouth'. This leaflet is for **adults** only and is based on the guidelines supplied by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). Separate information is available for children.

Fasting from food also includes **not** eating soup or sweets, chewing gum or taking milk in tea or coffee. You may be asked to drink clear fluids only.

Definition of clear fluids

Water, weak black tea or black coffee, weak cordial/squash.

Why is fasting important?

Fasting is important to avoid complications during your operation and anaesthetic. If you have anything in your stomach whilst you are under anaesthetic, it might come back up while you are unconscious and get into your lungs.

This leaflet only tells you about fasting before your operation. You will be given specific information about eating and drinking after the procedure by the nurses on the ward.

Before your operation

- Bring all of your prescribed medication with you when you come to the hospital. Tell the doctors and nurses about all of the medication you are taking, including herbal and off the shelf remedies.
- Please take a bath or shower on the morning of your admission.
- Please remove any makeup or nail varnish – if you have acrylic nails, please remove the nail varnish from at least two fingers. The nails can be left in place.
- You will not be able to wear contact lenses during the operation. Please bring any containers/solutions that you may need. Alternatively, you can wear your glasses.
- Please remove all jewellery; only plain wedding rings may be left on. Do not bring any valuables with you, as we cannot be held responsible for them.
- Please make sure you have a supply of **paracetamol and ibuprofen** at home for after your operation, unless you are unable to take these painkillers for any reason. They can be purchased from any chemist or supermarket.

Morning admissions – for 8.00am

- Please take any prescribed medication as normal, unless told otherwise by the pre-operative assessment nurse.
- **It is very important that you do not have anything to eat after 3.00am.** Please eat normally the day before your admission, unless told otherwise.
- You can drink as much clear fluids as you want up until **7.00am**, unless told otherwise by the pre-operative assessment nurse. Please make sure you have a large drink of clear fluids before 7.00am, to make sure you are well hydrated during the time that you are fasting.

Coming into hospital

Please come to the ward specified on your admission date letter. The date, time and where to go will be on a separate sheet of paper enclosed with this information leaflet.

We need you on the ward at this time, so that you can be seen by the nurses, surgeon and anaesthetist before your operation is due to start.

The actual time of your operation depends on where you are placed on the operating list. This is decided by the consultant and theatre team. Please be aware that you may have to wait for your allotted time.

What to bring with you

Day Case Unit

Please bring a dressing gown and slippers, as there will be a short walk to the operating theatre. Loose clothing is recommended for after your operation. You can bring a book or magazine to read whilst waiting for your operation slot.

You are welcome to bring **one** adult relative or friend. Please do not bring children under the age of 16. Please be aware that if there is more than one person they may be asked to wait elsewhere in the hospital.

After your operation

Specific instructions about your recovery after the operation will be given to you by the nurse looking after you. These will be based on your own personal requirements.

When you can be discharged from hospital will depend on your own personal circumstances and the type of operation you have had.

A responsible adult will need to accompany you home and will need to stay with you for the following 24 hours. You should not go home on public transport when you leave hospital. You will need to be taken home by car. This will be more comfortable for you and also quicker for you to return to the hospital if there are any complications on the journey home.

There is no set time for when you will be ready to be discharged. This will depend on how you are feeling and your personal recovery after your operation. You will need someone to be available all day to take you home. They will be contacted with a specific time for collection when this is known.

Your surgery may be cancelled if you do not have a responsible adult to accompany you home and care for you for 24 hours when you leave hospital, or if you do not follow the instructions about fasting times.

How to contact us

Day Case Unit

Tel: **01295 229 767**

01295 229 383

(9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

If you think you might not be able to come for your operation, please ring one of the numbers above.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

Author: Ward Manager, Horton Day Case Unit
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