# Pre-operative Fasting Guidelines

## For adults:

All patients admitted for elective surgery should be encouraged to drink clear fluids (water, squash, tea/coffee or fortijuice) freely up to 2 hours preoperatively.

It is the responsibility of staff on the ward or admissions lounge to ensure that patients remain adequately hydrated before surgery. Tea or coffee may contain a small amount of milk (up to one fifth volume) and be considered a clear fluid under this guideline.

**Chewing gum should not be used less than 2 hours pre-operatively**

Patients admitted for elective surgery should have no food (including milky drinks, fortisips & sweets) for a minimum period of 6 hours preoperatively.

Patients who are taking clear fluids containing sugar have no need of other nutrition preoperatively and fluid intake should be encouraged (within the above guideline). Feeding must be avoided if there is any uncertainty about the time until surgery – otherwise surgery may be postponed.

All patients scheduled for surgery on a morning operating list may be offered a clear fluid drink (water, squash, tea/coffee) before 6.30 am. Children should be encouraged to have a sugar sweetened drink. All patients scheduled for surgery on an afternoon list may have tea and toast by 7.30 am and be encouraged to drink clear fluids (water, squash, tea/coffee) up to 2 hours before theatre.

All patients admitted for elective surgery should take their regular medication as prescribed unless contraindicated (further guidance is available on ICID) or otherwise instructed. This medication may be taken with a small amount of water.

If for any reason the surgeon or anaesthetist wish to give other instructions regarding fasting or oral medications they must do so by writing clear instructions on the patient’s prescription chart.

Patients undergoing emergency surgery should also follow these fasting guidelines as appropriate. Further guidance will be given by the anaesthetist.

The anaesthetist may vary fasting guidance for a patient at their discretion.

## For paediatric patients

No formula milk feeds or food for 6 hours prior to anaesthesia.

No breast milk for 4 hours prior to anaesthesia.

Paediatric patients are encouraged to have 3-5ml/kg/hr of clear fluids up until 1 hour before anaesthesia.

Babies having 2 hourly milk feeds – please discuss with the anaesthetist.

## Who to contact:

If possible please discuss the patient with the anaesthetist for the list.

Alternatively: On-call anaesthetist: bleep 1178 Anaesthetic office (office hours): ext. 2050