

Eating and Drinking Before Your Procedure - Pediatrics

Your child’s procedure will be **delayed or cancelled** if you do not follow these restrictions. Their stomach must be empty for their procedure and anesthesia. We do not want contents (food or liquids) from your child’s stomach to get into their lungs. We want to help keep your child safe.

What can my child eat and drink the night before and day of their procedure?

Procedure arrival time: _____

| | Not Allowed by mouth or feeding tube | Allowed by mouth or feeding tube |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Follow these restrictions unless your doctor tells you something different. | | |
| After 11:00 p.m. the night before their procedure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food • No gum, candy, or mints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fluids (drinks) |
| 6 hours before procedure arrival time _____ a.m./p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food • No formula • No non-human milk (like cow’s milk, almond milk) • No non-clear fluids (see page 2) • No thickener | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only clear fluids (see page 2) • Plain breast milk for breastfeeding babies is okay (do not add thickener, cereal, or human milk fortifier). |
| 4 hours before procedure arrival time _____ a.m./p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food • No formula or non-human milk • No non-clear fluids • No breast milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only clear fluids (see page 2) |
| 2 hours before procedure arrival time _____ a.m./p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food or fluids (drinks) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed liquid medicines • If your child must take prescribed pill medicines, take them with 1 sip (about 1 ounce) of water. • Crushed medicines may be taken with 2 tablespoons or less of plain apple jelly (not pudding or applesauce). |

The contents of this education are for information purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Users should not rely on the information provided for medical decision making and should direct all questions regarding medical matters to their physician or other health care provider. Use of this information does not create an express or implied physician-patient relationship.

| Clear fluids | Non-clear fluids |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only apple or white grape juice • Black coffee without milk or cream • Clear tea without milk or cream • Infant electrolyte drinks like Pedialyte® • Clear sports drinks like Gatorade® (any color) • Clear carbonated drinks like Sprite® or 7-Up® • Clear protein drinks like Ensure Clear®, Premier Protein Clear®, Fizzique® • Water • Do not add milk, creamer, honey, or lemon to any clear fluid drinks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broth • Milk • Coconut water • Jello™ • Hot chocolate • Orange juice (with or without pulp) and other fruit juices • Smoothies • Formulas like Pediasure®, Enfamil®, and Similac® • Tube feeding formulas like Promote®, Impact®, and Nepro® |

Why can't my child eat or drink before their procedure?

- Anesthesia slows down protective reflexes, such as coughing and swallowing.
- One protective reflex keeps stomach contents from going into the lungs. This is called aspiration. If this happens, oxygen cannot get into the lungs.
- Aspiration is less likely to happen when the stomach is empty. Fasting (not eating or drinking) keeps the stomach empty.
- Aspiration may cause brain damage or death.

Can my child have gum or hard candy while waiting for their procedure?

- No, your child cannot chew or swallow gum. Your child cannot suck on or swallow hard candy. Your child's procedure may be delayed or cancelled if they do this.

If my teenager uses tobacco, when should they stop?

| Type of tobacco use | When should they stop? |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vape, smoke cigarettes, and so on | On the day of their procedure, no vaping, smoking, and so on, unless their care team has told them to stop sooner (such as no smoking for at least 30 days before their procedure). |
| Chew tobacco, put snuff in their mouth, and so on | Stop 8 hours before their procedure arrival time, unless their care team has told them to stop sooner than that. |

Who came up with these guidelines?

- Our Department of Anesthesia used research and expert opinions from the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the European Society of Anesthesiologists to make these guidelines.