

GUIDELINE

Fasting

Preamble

The Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Accreditation Program (NHMSFAP) Committee develops professional guidelines to assist physicians in meeting high standards of medical practice and conduct. A guideline reflects a recommended course of action established based on the values, principles and duties of the medical profession. Guidelines attempt to define practices that meet the needs of patients in most circumstances and are not a replacement for clinical judgment. As a result, situations may arise in which deviations from these guidelines may be appropriate and physicians may exercise reasonable discretion in their decision-making based on the guidance provided.

In accordance with the Canadian Anesthesiologist's Society Guidelines to the Practice of Anesthesia, fasting guidelines should take into account age, pre-existing medical conditions and should apply to all forms of anesthesia.

Practice guidelines

1. Fasting guidelines should take into account age and pre-existing medical conditions.
2. Fasting guidelines apply to all forms of anesthesia including general anesthesia, regional blocks and IV procedural sedation.
3. The amount and type of food ingested must be considered when determining an appropriate fasting period.
4. Before elective procedures, the minimum duration of fasting should be:

Minimum fasting period	Amount and type of food ingested
8 hours	Heavy meal (e.g. meat, fried or fatty foods)
6 hours	Light meal (easy-

4 hours	After ingestion of breast milk (no additions are allowed to pumped breast milk)
2 hours	After ingestion of clear fluids (e.g. water, fruit juice without pulp, black coffee)

References

Dobson G, Chong M, Chow L, Flexman A, Kurrek M, Laflamme C, Lagacee A, Stacey S, Thiessen B. Guidelines to the practice of anesthesia - revised edition 2017. Can J Anaesth [Internet]. 2017 Jan [cited 2017 Feb 6];64(1):65-91. Available from: http://www.cas.ca/English/Page/Files/97_Guidelines-2016.pdf

American Society of Anesthesiologists Committee. Practice guidelines for preoperative fasting and the use of pharmacologic agents to reduce the risk of pulmonary aspiration: application to healthy patients undergoing elective procedures: an updated report by the American Society of Anesthesiologists Committee on Standards and Practice Parameters.