

Surgical Procedures

Preoperative Care

Children experiencing surgical procedures require both psychological and physical preparation. An important concern is restriction of food and fluids before surgery to avoid aspiration during anesthesia. Infants require special attention to fluid needs. They should not be without oral fluids for an extended period preoperatively to avoid glycogen depletion and dehydration. [Table 20-2](#) contains current preoperative fasting guidelines.

TABLE 20-2

Fasting Recommendations to Reduce the Risk of Pulmonary Aspiration*

Ingested Material	Minimum Fasting Period (hr) [†]
Clear liquids [‡]	>2
Breast milk	4
Infant formula	6
Nonhuman milk [§]	6
Light meal	6

*These recommendations apply to healthy patients who are undergoing elective procedures. They are not intended for women in labor. Following the guidelines does not guarantee that complete gastric emptying has occurred.

[†]Fasting periods noted in chart apply to all ages.

[‡]Examples of clear liquids include water, fruit juices without pulp, carbonated beverages, clear tea, and black coffee.

[§]Because nonhuman milk is similar to solids in gastric emptying time, the amount ingested must be considered when determining appropriate fasting period.

^{||}A light meal typically consists of toast and clear liquids. Meals that include fried or fatty foods or meat may prolong gastric emptying time. Both the amount and type of foods ingested must be considered when determining an appropriate fasting period.

From American Society of Anesthesiologists: 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, *Anesthesiology* 90(3):896–905, 1999.

In general, psychological preparation is similar to that discussed earlier for any procedure and uses many of the same techniques used in preparing a child for hospitalization, such as films, books, brochures, play, and tours (see [Chapter 19](#)). Stress points before and after surgery include the admission process, blood tests, injection of