

SOP – Fasting before surgery

Three-level colour-coded system for fasting with fasting cards:

Green	Patients without significant pre-existing conditions or special surgical or interventional requirements
Yellow	Individualised approach
Red	Patients who are not allowed to eat or drink anything from the time of indication onwards.

Inpatients for elective surgery:

Inpatients are given a green, yellow or red laminated DIN A 4 (210 mm x 297 mm) fasting card at their bedside, the evening before their operation/ examination, depending on their classification. The fasting times for solid foods and liquids are indicated on the card.

Outpatients and pre-admission elective surgery patients:

Outpatients and pre-admission patients receive the appropriate fasting card as a paper flyer (DIN A5, 148 mm x 210 mm) during the pre-anaesthetic assessment.

Emergency patients:

Emergency patients receive an appropriate fasting card immediately:

Red: Patients are not allowed to eat or drink from the time of diagnosis.

Yellow: Patients requiring urgent surgery who are no longer allowed to eat but are allowed to drink until they are called for surgery.

Note: For patients with severe injuries:

Fasting time = last food intake up to the time of trauma

Green card fasting recommendations:

- Normal diet Till the eve of your operation/examination
- Light diet 6 h before surgery (usually till midnight)
- Clear liquids Till transport to operating theatre/ examination

Children's fasting recommendations

Children should be given a green fasting card as a first priority, as the pre-anaesthetic assessment usually takes place before the surgical schedule is finalised and older children like to sleep late in the morning.

Times that deviate from the green card are implemented using the yellow card.

- Normal diet: Till the eve of your operation/examination
- Light diet: 4 h before surgery
- Breastmilk 3 h before surgery
- Clear liquids Till transport to operating theatre/examination

Contraindications for the green fasting card:

A red card is given to patients with:

- ***Ileus, gastrointestinal obstruction***
- **All emergency and emergency revision abdominal surgeries**
- ***Emergency patients, e.g. with severe trauma***
- ***Hypertrophic pyloric stenosis***
- ***Gastric volvulus***

A yellow card is given to patients with:

- **Regurgitation/relevant coughing attacks** while lying down:
 - Normal diet: Till the eve of your operation/examination
 - Light diet: 6 h before surgery (usually till midnight)
 - Clear liquids: Till 2 hours before surgery/examination
- **Special surgical/interventional requirements:**
 - According to the instructions of the respective departments.

Adjusting fasting recommendations for individual patients

Depending on the operation, the patient's pre-existing medical conditions and the food ingested, shorter fasting periods may be accepted for selected patients with the approval of a consultant.

- Light diet up to 4 hours before the operation
- Normal diet up to 6 hours before the operation

Note: Very fatty foods may require very long fasting periods.