



Covenant  
Health

## Eating and Drinking Before Surgery: Patient Instructions

Arrival Time:

Surgery Time:

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### Eat normally up until the night before surgery

#### 8 hours before surgery you may eat a final snack (optional)

Choose one:

- Small piece of fruit + 1 cup of cereal + ½ cup milk  
OR
- Small piece of fruit + 1 slice toast with jam + ½ cup yogurt (NO butter/NO peanut butter)

No more eating past this time and **ONLY** drink clear fluids:

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### Drink clear fluids up to 3 hours before surgery time

Choose any:

- ✓ Water
- ✓ Apple juice
- ✓ Cranberry cocktail
- ✓ Black coffee
- ✓ Black tea

Do **NOT** drink:

- ⊗ Milk
- ⊗ Juice with pulp
- ⊗ Protein powder
- ⊗ Alcohol
- ⊗ Drinks **not** included in  
'Choose any' column

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### 3 hours before surgery you may have a final drink (optional)

Choose one:

- Apple juice – 2 cups (500 ml)  
OR
- Cranberry cocktail – 2 cups (500 ml)

No more drinking past this time:

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**\*\*Follow these instructions carefully or your surgery may be CANCELLED\*\*** This is for your safety to prevent food or fluid from going into your lungs (aspiration).

If you have any questions, please call:

Grey Nuns Hospital Extended Day Unit at 780-735-7400

Why do I need to follow instructions about eating and drinking before surgery?

It is important to follow the instructions for what to eat and drink before your surgery and when to stop. When food is in your stomach too close to your Surgery Time, you may vomit. If this happens, the vomit could spill into your lungs (aspiration) and affect your breathing as well as cause damage to your lungs.



**Aspiration during surgery is dangerous and can cause death**

What happens if I eat past the 8-hour limit or drink past the 3-hour limit?

If you eat or drink past the recommended time limits, there is a chance your surgery will be cancelled and rescheduled. This is to ensure your safety during the surgery.

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What food should I **avoid** for the final snack before surgery?

Avoid fatty foods in your final snack such as:

Meat  
Eggs

Margarine or butter  
Peanut butter

Fried food  
Other nut butters

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Why do I need to eat a final snack and drink clear fluids before surgery?

Eating and drinking the right things before your surgery helps your body get ready for surgery, stay hydrated and have enough energy after surgery.

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What types of fluids should I **avoid** before surgery?

- Orange juice or juice with pulp
- Dairy products/milk
- Coffee or tea with milk or cream
- Alcohol for at least 24 hours



**STOP drinking alcohol 24 hours before your surgery**

Why do I need to drink 500 mL (2 cups) of clear apple juice or cranberry cocktail 3 hours before surgery?

Drinking 500 mL (2 cups) of clear apple juice or cranberry cocktail 3 hours before your Surgery Time is called carbohydrate loading (carb loading). Carb loading helps your body have enough energy to get through the physical stress of surgery. The extra energy helps you begin your recovery immediately after surgery.