



## Fasting instructions for Children Undergoing Surgery

It is important for your child to be adequately fasted for surgery from a meal and/or milk to reduce risk of aspiration. Aspiration occurs when stomach contents enter the lungs, which can lead to serious breathing complications.

However, it is also important to offer your child clear fluids containing some calories up to **1 hour** before the surgery to allow them to stay hydrated and prevent hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar levels). This has been proven to be safe, reduce unnecessary stress, hunger and discomfort to your child and improve post-operative healing. Water can be offered, but it lacks the calories required for the benefits mentioned.

As such, **Table 1** shows the fasting guidelines adhered to in KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH). These guidelines may differ, depending on the type of surgery your child is coming for. The exact timing to be fasted will be advised by the nurses the day before surgery. Examples of clear fluids (non-particulate, non-oily fluids, where you can see through the fluid) are shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 1: Fasting instructions according to age**  
**Children less than 4 months old**

	Non- human milk*	Breast milk	Clear fluids (up to 25mls)
Timing of last feed	4h	4h	1h

### Children 4 months to 1 year old

	Non-human milk*	Breast milk	Clear fluids (up to 25mls)
Timing of last feed	6h	4h	1h

### Children more than 1 year old

	Full, heavy meal (oily, carb-heavy)	Non-human milk/ Light meal	Breast milk	Clear fluids (volume will be advised by the nurse)
Timing of last feed	8h	6h	4h	1h

**Table 2: Examples of clear fluids and age-appropriateness of use:**

	0 to 12 months old	More than 1 year old
Commercial glucose polymer 5 x 5ml teaspoons to every 100ml water	✓	✓
Clear apple juice (no pulp, jelly or aloe vera bits)		✓
Uncarbonated blackcurrent drink (ready to drink)		✓
Sugar/ Honey 2 x 5ml teaspoons to every 100ml water		✓

• Examples of **non-human milk** include:

- 1) Age-appropriate cow's and goat's milk powder
- 2) Fresh milk (both cow's and goat's milk) – not suitable for infants below 1 year old
- 3) Plant based milk e.g. soy milk, almond milk, rice milk – not suitable for infants below 1 year old (except soy infant milk powder)

• Examples of **light meals** are:

- 1) 1 slice of plain white/ wholemeal bread (with no spreads/ fillings)
- 2) 2-3 plain biscuits/ crackers (with no spreads/ fillings)
- 3) Half cup (120mls) of plain cornflakes/ rice cereal with no additional sugar frosting/chocolate coating/ nuts

*This information is provided as a guide. For queries or further information, please consult the nurse who will be calling you before your child's operation*