

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Preoperative Oral Fluid Diets

Nutrition, Anaesthesia Perioperative Care and Endocrine Networks

Appropriate use of preoperative oral fluids can improve postoperative wellbeing and clinical outcomes.

The ACI Nutrition Network, in collaboration with the Anaesthesia Perioperative Care and Endocrine Networks, has released two new diet specifications to help hospitals prepare patients for surgery and some procedures.

What are Diet Specifications?

Diet Specifications are used by dietitians and food service managers to design hospital menus. They outline the aim, characteristics and indications for the diet. Diet Specifications also list the foods that are allowed and not allowed to be offered and/or served to patients on a specific diet.

What are the Preoperative Oral Fluid Diets?

Preoperative oral fluid diets can be ordered for patients until two hours before a procedure that involves anaesthesia or sedation. There is one for people with diabetes and another for people without diabetes. Using the diets will help replace or maintain the body's water balance and leave minimal residue in the stomach.

Why were the diets developed?

The diets were developed to:

- help prevent unnecessary fasting of patients awaiting surgery
- help prevent surgeries being cancelled or postponed due to interpretation of fasting criteria or preparation
- provide clarity about preoperative fasting.

Who developed the diets?

Members of the ACI Nutrition, Anaesthesia Perioperative Care and Endocrine Networks.

Which patients are the diets applicable to?

Patients undergoing a procedure that involves anaesthesia or sedation. This may include inpatients, day of surgery etc.

Due to the lack of adequate evidence about patient safety, the diets are not suitable for people with dysphagia who need thickened fluids.

When should the diets be used?

The Preoperative Oral Fluid diets can be used for patients until two hours before a procedure. The patient should then be placed nil-by-mouth.

How long can the diets be used for?

It is recommended that the preoperative oral fluids diet is not used for more than 24 hours. It is recommended that the preoperative oral fluids – diabetes diet is not used for more than 12 hours.

What happens if a patient has been on the diet for more than 12/24hrs?

This should be determined on a case-by-case basis following local protocols.

How does the preoperative oral fluid diet differ to the existing clear fluid diet?

Some items allowed on the clear fluid diet (e.g. jelly and broth) are not allowed on the preoperative oral fluids diets. See Table 1 for more information.

What other diets are available before and after procedures?

Other fluid diets include clear fluids and full fluids. See Table 1 for more information.

When will the diets be available within NSW Health facilities?

The diets are currently being added to the menu management systems within each LHD/Network. This should be completed by mid-December. Then the diets need to be added to the local system used to order diets (e.g. eMR/Powerchart).

Go-live dates for the diets will be determined locally and may be dependent on training for staff.

You may like to speak to your Nutrition and Dietetics Department for more information.

After go-live, how do I order the diet?

Once a clinician has prescribed the diet it should be ordered in the local diet ordering system at the appropriate time.

Please follow the local diet order cut-off times to ensure patients receive the appropriate diet at meal times.

Example timeline for a procedure scheduled at 12noon.

Timeline	0000	0200	0400	0600	0800	1000	1200
General patients	Solids			Preoperative oral fluids (4hrs)		NBM (2hrs)	Procedure
People with diabetes	Solids			Preoperative oral fluids - diabetes (4hrs)		NBM (2hrs)	
People with dysphagia and needing thickened fluids	Solids			NBM (6hrs)			

About the ACI

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) works with clinicians, consumers and managers to design and promote better healthcare for NSW.

Our Clinical Networks, Taskforces and Institutes provide a unique forum for people to collaborate to develop successful healthcare innovations. We support the case for change using evidence, health economics and evaluation.

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Table 1: Comparison of fluid diet specifications

	Preoperative Oral Fluids – Diabetes	Preoperative Oral Fluids	Clear fluids	Full fluids
Aim	To continue oral fluids for people with diabetes until two hours before a procedure to replace or maintain the body's water balance and leave minimal residue in the stomach.	To continue oral fluids until two hours before a procedure to replace or maintain the body's water balance and leave minimal residue in the stomach.	To provide clear fluids to replace or maintain the body's water balance and leave minimum residue in the intestinal tract	To provide a diet of liquids.
Characteristics	Only fluids that are rapidly cleared from the stomach. All liquids containing fat, protein, and insoluble fibre are excluded. Carbohydrate-containing fluids are also excluded to improve perioperative glycaemic control.	Only fluids that are rapidly cleared from the stomach. All liquids containing fat, protein and insoluble fibre are excluded.	Only fluids or foods that liquefy at room temperature. All liquids containing fat are excluded.	Liquid foods that require no chewing.
Indications for use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of patients with diabetes for procedures involving anaesthesia or sedation. This diet can be used until two hours prior to the procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of patients for procedures involving anaesthesia or sedation. This diet can be used until two hours prior to the procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following gastrointestinal surgery as a first step in oral rehydration. To reduce the amount of residue in the colon as preparation for bowel surgery or barium enema. Severe nausea, vomiting or acute diarrhoea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A temporary transition from clear fluids to normal diet as indicated (e.g. post-surgery or procedure).
Recommended maximum time on diet	12 hours	24 hours	Three days, unless appropriate nutrition supplements are used	Three days, unless appropriate nutrition supplements are used
Foods that may be offered	<p>Water</p> <p>Diet cordial and lemonade</p> <p>Black tea and coffee</p> <p>Carbohydrate-free commercial rehydration fluids</p> <p>Sweetener</p> <p><i>Note: fluids must not contain red, blue or purple colouring</i></p>	<p>Water, apple juice, other pulp-free fruit juice, cordial, lemonade</p> <p>Black tea and coffee</p> <p>Commercial rehydration fluids</p> <p>Commercial high-energy, fat-free, protein-free nutritional supplements</p> <p>Sugar, sweetener</p> <p><i>Note: fluids must not contain red, blue or purple colouring</i></p>	<p>Fat-free clear soup and broths</p> <p>Plain jelly, sorbet</p> <p>Water, apple juice, other pulp-free fruit juice, cordial, soft drink</p> <p>Black tea and coffee</p> <p>Plain boiled sweets, gums and jubes</p> <p>Commercial rehydration fluids and high-energy, fat-free, milk-free nutritional supplements</p> <p>Sugar, salt, sweetener</p> <p>Thickened fluids</p>	<p>Soups without visible food pieces including homogenised or pureed soups</p> <p>Strained rolled oats, semolina or rice cereal with milk, sugar or honey</p> <p>Drinking yoghurt and smooth yoghurt without fruit pieces</p> <p>Plain jelly, plain smooth ice-cream, soft custard and smooth milk desserts (e.g. mousse, crème caramel)</p> <p>Water, fruit juice, strained vegetable juices milk, tea and coffee, cordial and soft drink</p> <p>Nutritional supplements</p> <p>Sugar, sweetener, salt, pepper, thin cream</p> <p>Thickened fluids</p>

