Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Instructions Before Your Surgery or Procedure

These instructions will help you know what to eat and drink before your procedure or surgery at MSK. They will also help you know what medicines to take.

We will talk with you about these instructions during your presurgical testing (PST) appointment.

Instructions for eating and drinking before your surgery or procedure

These instructions are to keep you safe. It is not safe to have food or liquid in your stomach when you get sedation or anesthesia. These are medicines to make you drowsy or sleep. Following these instructions will help make sure your stomach is empty.

It is very important to follow these instructions. **If you do not follow them, your surgery or procedure will be delayed or canceled.**

Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop eating or drinking earlier than what's written here. If they do, follow their instructions.

Instructions for eating

Stop eating at midnight (12 a.m.) the night before your surgery or procedure. This includes hard candy and gum.

If your healthcare provider told you to stop eating earlier than midnight, follow their instructions. Some people need to fast (not eat) for longer before their surgery or procedure.

Instructions for drinking

Between midnight (12 a.m.) and 2 hours before your arrival time, only drink the liquids on the list below. **Do not eat or drink anything else.** Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time.

- Water
- Clear apple juice, clear grape juice, or clear cranberry juice
- Gatorade or Powerade
- Black coffee or plain tea. It's OK to add sugar. Do not add anything else.
    - Do not add any amount of any type of milk or creamer. This includes plant-based milks and creamers.
    - Do not add honey
    - Do not add flavored syrup

If you have diabetes, pay attention to the amount of sugar in these drinks. It's easier to control your blood sugar levels if you include drinks that are sugar-free, low-sugar, or have no added sugar.

It's helpful to stay hydrated before surgery, so drink if you are thirsty. Do not drink more than you need. You will get intravenous (IV) fluids during your surgery or procedure.

Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time. This includes water.

Instructions for taking medicines before your surgery or procedure

Take these medicines **the night before** your surgery or procedure:

Take these medicines **the day of** your surgery or procedure. It's OK to take them with small sips of water:

Stop taking these medicines **____ days before** your surgery or procedure:

Stop taking these medicines **____ days before** your surgery or procedure:

These are **new medicines** you will start taking:

Stop taking any vitamins, supplements, or herbal remedies 7 days before the day of your surgery or procedure.

Stop taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen

(Advil® and Motrin®) and naproxen (Aleve®), 2 days before the day of your surgery or procedure.

Additional information

A staff member will call you after 2 p.m. the day before your surgery or procedure. If your surgery or procedure is scheduled for a Monday, they'll call you the Friday before. If you do not get a call by 7 p.m., call 212-639-5014.

The staff member will tell you what time to arrive for your surgery or procedure.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Instructions Before Your Surgery or Procedure - Last updated on June 3, 2024
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center