

Fasting for your blood test

Information for patients

What is fasting?

Fasting means that from the the night before your blood test, you must not eat anything.

Why do I need to fast before my blood test?

Some blood tests give more useful results if you fast before the sample is taken. The vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates, and proteins that make up all food and drinks can affect blood-level readings, clouding the results of your test.

Your doctor will tell you if you need to fast before your blood test.

How long do I need to fast before my blood test?

Your doctor will tell you how long to fast, as it is different for each test. Examples of fasting times for some blood tests are listed in the table below.

Table listing how long patients should fast before certain blood tests	
Test	Time
Fasting glucose	8 hours
Gut hormones (including chromogranin A and B)	8 hours
Homocysteine	8 hours
Lipids/triglycerides/cholesterol	12 to 14 hours
Oral glucose tolerance test	8 to 14 hours
Plasma free metapephrines	8 to 14 hours
Testosterone (males)	8 hours



How do I fast for my blood test?

- **You can eat your dinner the night** before your test.
- **Do not eat breakfast on the morning** of your blood test.
- **You can only drink water on the morning** of your test.
- **Do not drink tea, coffee, or fizzy drinks (for example cola) on the morning** of your test. This includes black coffee and sugar-free (diet) drinks.
- **Do not chew gum or smoke on the morning** of your test. This includes vaping and using nicotine patches.

Can I take my usual medicine on the morning of my blood test?

You should not change your medication unless you are told to do so by your doctor. If your medicine needs to be taken with food and this will interfere with the timing of your fasting blood test, please discuss this with your doctor.

I'm diabetic, what should I do?

If you are diabetic, please speak to your doctor before you begin fasting for any test.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation