



# Fasting for your blood test

Information for patients from the Clinical Biochemistry Department

## 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	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.**

**Please let us know:**

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

**You can let us know this by:**

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring 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 has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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