

Fasting and Treatment Recommendations for Dogs and Cats Prior to Anesthesia



It can be confusing to determine what a patient should receive by mouth prior to anesthesia, even if they are healthy. It becomes more complicated when there are pre-existing conditions that require treatment. Use this table to support your recommendations.

Patient Status	Withhold Water for ____ Hr		Withhold Food for ____ Hr				Feed Pâté-Consistency Wet Food	Treatments and Medications				Other
	0*	6–12	1–2	2–4	4–6	6–12		Monitor BG	Chronic Oral Meds [†]	Anti-emetic, [§] Antacid, and Proton Pump Inhibitors	Insulin	
Healthy	✓				✓				✓			
<8 wks of age or <2 kg	✓		No longer than 1–2 hr				✓ In pre-op period	Before, during, and after induction	✓			Perform as first case of the day
Diabetic	✓			✓			½ meal 2–4 hr prior	Before, during, and after	✓		½ dose given 2–4 hr prior	Perform as the first case of the day
History of, or at risk for, regurgitation		✓				✓	Consider feeding 10%–25% of normal amount 4–6 hr prior to induction		✓	✓		
Emergent		ASAP								✓		Stabilize patient prior to induction

* 0 hr = allow free access to water

[†] Oral medications may be administered with small amount (1–2 tbs) wet food or pills coated in an edible paste-like material.

[§] Anti-emetics are a valid addition to any anesthetic protocol due to the potential for increased patient comfort by decreasing vomiting secondary to pre-anesthetic medications.

Review textbox “Recommendations for Chronic Medications the Day of Anesthesia.” Use clinical judgement in healthy patients to determine if giving a small amount of in-hospital treats to facilitate gentle handling or decreasing patient stress would be beneficial prior to anesthesia.

The 2020 AAHA Anesthesia and Monitoring Guidelines for Dogs and Cats are available at aaha.org/anesthesia.

This document is intended as a guideline only, not an AAHA standard of care. These guidelines and recommendations should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. Variations in practice may be warranted based on the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to each individual practice setting.

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