

# Carbohydrate-rich drinks before thoracic surgery for patients who can eat and drink

**This leaflet is for patients having thoracic surgery and who can eat and drink by mouth. It aims to answer your questions about having carbohydrate-rich nutrition (carbohydrate loading) before surgery. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives, as well as what you should do if you experience any problems.**

**If you have any further questions, please speak to the nurse caring for you.**

## What is carbohydrate loading?

Carbohydrate loading is taking sugary (carbohydrate-rich) drinks on the night before and morning of your operation.

## Why should I have carbohydrate loading?

Research has shown that taking carbohydrate-rich drinks before your operation reduces your thirst, hunger and anxiety. It also helps you recover more quickly after your operation.

## How do I take carbohydrate-rich drinks?

We have provided you with four carbohydrate-rich drinks:

- two Fortijuce™ bottles
- two PreOp™ cartons.

Please follow the instructions below, which explain how to take these drinks:

1. By midnight on the evening before your operation, drink two bottles of Fortijuce™. You should also drink a minimum of 400ml (two drinks) of any clear fluids, for example, water or squash.
2. Stop eating food by midnight on the evening before your operation and continue with clear fluids until 6am before your operation.
3. By 6am on the morning of your surgery, drink two cartons of PreOp™.

## What are the risks of carbohydrate loading?

There is no evidence of any significant risk from taking carbohydrate-rich drinks. However, you must make sure that you:

- stop eating food six hours before your operation
- stop drinking clear fluids two hours before your operation.

If there is food or liquid in your stomach when you are anaesthetised (put to sleep for your operation) it could come up your throat. If you breathe it in, it will damage your lungs.

## What are the alternatives?

If you choose not to take carbohydrate-rich drinks before your thoracic surgery, you must still:

- stop eating food six hours before your operation
- stop drinking clear fluids two hours before your operation.

## What should I do if I have a problem?

If you are unable to consume all of the carbohydrate-rich drinks, please take as much as you can. When you come to hospital for your operation please tell the nurse how much of the carbohydrate-rich drinks you were able to drink.

Carbohydrate-rich drinks can sometimes cause vomiting or diarrhoea. If you experience vomiting or diarrhoea, stop drinking the carbohydrate-rich drinks. When you come to hospital for your operation please tell the nurse how much you were able to drink.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about carbohydrate loading, please contact the Nutrition and Dietetics Department on **020 7188 4128** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or the Preassessment Nurse on **020 7188 8840**.

Out of hours, please contact Dorcas Ward on **020 7188 8840**.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

## Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

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