

Carbohydrate Loading Before Surgery

How it can help

This handout explains why drinking extra carbohydrates (carbs) before surgery is helpful. It also tells how to do your carb loading.

How do I carbohydrate load?

- The night before surgery, drink **one** of these:
 - 1 carton (8 oz.) Boost Breeze nutritional drink
 - 16 oz. (480 ml) apple or cranberry juice
- On the day of your surgery, **2 hours before** you arrive at the hospital, drink **one** of these:
 - 1 carton (8 oz.) Boost Breeze nutritional drink
 - 8 oz. (240 ml) apple or cranberry juice

Why should I drink extra carbohydrates before surgery?

We find that patients have better results when they drink extra carbohydrates (carbs) before surgery. Carb loading helps your body handle the stress of surgery.

How does carb loading improve my surgery outcome?

If you drink extra carbs before your surgery:

- You will likely be more comfortable both before and after surgery. You will likely feel less thirsty, less hungry, and less anxious.
- You will likely have better blood sugar control after surgery.
- Your bowels will return to normal function more quickly after surgery.
- You may even have a shorter hospital stay.



Drinking extra carbohydrates before surgery can improve your recovery time.

What else can I eat or drink before surgery?

- You may eat a large meal **up to 8 hours before** you arrive for surgery.
- You may eat a light, low-fat meal **up to 6 hours before** you arrive for surgery.
- You may drink clear liquids such as water, plain tea or coffee (no milk or creamer), clear broth, Gatorade, soda, or apple juice **up to 2 hours before** you arrive for surgery.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Nutrition Services: 206.744.4612,
weekdays 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Operating Room: 206.744.8800,
weeknights 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.