



ERAS[®] NUTRITION STRATEGIES FOR ELECTIVE SURGERIES

Many healthcare providers and surgical teams are now following *Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS[®])* care plans to help you prepare your body for surgery, recover faster, and get back to everyday activities as soon as possible.

A key part of ERAS care plans is good nutrition to support a faster, stronger recovery from surgery. Nutrients from food are the building blocks for your body, and good nutrition supports a successful recovery by:

- ✓ **Helping repair wounds and injuries**
- ✓ **Maintaining and building muscle**
- ✓ **Providing support for your immune system to help fight infections**
- ✓ **Increasing energy levels**

NUTRITION BEFORE SURGERY

Before surgery, talk to your healthcare provider about whether an ERAS care plan is a good approach for you to follow. Surgery creates unique nutrition needs for your body, and you want to make sure your body has the strength and energy it needs to successfully recover. As part of the ERAS care plan, before surgery, your care team will do a nutrition risk screening and give you nutrition counseling.



Nutrition risk screening is important to check your nutrition status and see if you are at risk for poor nutrition.



Nutrition counseling can help improve your nutrition and prepare your body for surgery.

Traditionally, it was thought that eating or drinking anything before surgery was a problem because food or drink could remain in your stomach and be a risk for aspiration. Therefore, for years, patients were asked to fast after midnight the day before surgery. We now know that, with guidance from your healthcare provider, it is safe and often beneficial to eat and drink closer to the scheduled time of surgery.

WHEN SHOULD I STOP EATING BEFORE A PROCEDURE?

As part of the ERAS care plan, your care team will likely allow solid foods up to six hours before surgery and clear liquids up to two hours before surgery.¹

Through the ERAS care plan, you may also receive special carbohydrate-containing, clear beverages to drink before surgery. Surgery often causes stress to the body which can lead to insulin resistance, even if you do not have a history of diabetes. Special carbohydrate drinks have been shown to help manage blood sugar after surgery and improve recovery. Your care team will provide specific instructions on when to drink these beverages; usually carbohydrate drinks are consumed the night before surgery and 2 hours before surgery.¹⁻⁴

NUTRITION AFTER SURGERY

The ERAS care plan promotes good nutrition after surgery too. Your care team can guide you and usually you can start eating soon after surgery.¹ Good nutrition (including making sure you get enough protein) after surgery can help enhance your recovery, reduce risk of infections, and shorten your hospital stay.⁴ Your care team may also recommend special immunonutrition products to help improve your immune function before and/or after surgery.

OTHER ERAS PRIORITIES

There are other ERAS priorities after surgery too, including pain relief and early movement. Your healthcare team will help you learn what is most important for you. Remember that once you go home and continue to recover, maintaining good nutrition will help you:



HEAL FASTER



**PREVENT
COMPLICATIONS**



**BUILD YOUR
STRENGTH**

WHAT'S NEXT?

Remember to follow up with your healthcare team or primary care physician if you have any ERAS questions or nutrition concerns after surgery. To learn more general information about the ERAS care plan, view our “Have you heard about ERAS?” resource.

ERAS RESOURCES

- **ERAS Society—ERAS Overview for Patients:** <https://bit.ly/ERASoverview>
- **ERAS Society—Patient Resources:** <https://bit.ly/ERASresources>
- **Abbott Nutrition Health Institute (ANHI) Video—ERAS: The Role of Nutrition to Improve Outcomes:** <https://bit.ly/ANHIvideo1>

REFERENCES: 1. Prabhaker S, Nanavati AJ. *Nutr Issues Gastroenterol.* 2016. <https://med.virginia.edu/ginutrition/wp-content/uploads/sites/199/2014/06/Parrish-April-2016.pdf>. | 2. Martin L, et al. *JPEN J Parenter Enteral Nutr.* 2019;43(2):206-19. | 3. American Society of Nurse Anesthetists. Enhanced recovery after surgery. 2019. Accessed June 11, 2020. <https://www.aana.com/practice/clinical-practice-resources/enhanced-recovery-after-surgery>. | 4. Glanz S. Part 2: Nutrition's Role in ERAS | Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Series. Dietitians on Demand. Published July 23, 2018. Accessed June 11, 2020. <https://dietitiansondemand.com/part-2-nutrition-roles-in-eras-enhanced-recovery-after-surgery-series/>.