

## **PLANNING FOR YOUR SURGERY**

**I have been told that after a certain hour I should not eat or drink anything. Is fasting really necessary?**

Yes. In a healthy person, it typically takes 8 hours for food to leave the stomach. Any food or fluid that is in the stomach can be vomited under anesthesia and can enter your lungs while you are unconscious or sedated. This is called *aspiration*. Aspiration can keep you in the hospital for an overnight stay, place you in the ICU, or in extremely rare but severe cases result in death.

**I know what time my surgery will be, but they have asked me to come to the hospital much earlier than the scheduled surgery time. Is this correct? How important is it that I arrive at the requested time?**

It is very important that you arrive to the hospital at the time that you have been instructed to do so. Many things have to be done to prepare you for your surgery. You will have many papers to read and sign, including consents to surgery and anesthesia. Once in the surgical waiting area, your intravenous line (IV) must be placed to allow you to receive medications in the operating room. The pre-surgical nurse will need to confirm the medications that you take and the last time you took them. Some patients will need labs or EKGs (a recorded rhythm of your heart) done. The anesthesia provider will need to see you and discuss your anesthetic. Depending on your surgery and your medical condition, still other things may need to be done. If you are late to arrive, your surgical case may be delayed or even cancelled.