

# *Patient Instructions for Fasting Specimens*

## **Purpose**

Drawing instructions are intended to help you draw the correct specimen for the test your clinician has requested. First read instructions carefully, you may be required to fast before having a blood test. This is because certain test values change following the digestion of food. The measurement of blood sugar (glucose) and some blood lipids (fats and cholesterol) are common examples.

## **Instructions**

- **If you are asked to fast for your test:**

- Do not eat or drink anything (except water) for 8 hours before you go to the laboratory to have your blood drawn. If your physician has ordered lipid tests, you must fast for at least 12 hours. This usually means from 8 p.m. the previous evening. You may drink water, but no juice, tea, or coffee.
- Do not smoke, chew gum, or exercise. These activities may stimulate digestive system and alter test results. After specimen is drawn, you may resume your normal diet.
  - May I drink water? Yes, you can drink water but not other kinds of drinks.
  - Should I continue to take my medications? Yes, unless your doctor tells you not to.
  - May I drink juice? No, just water.
  - May I drink coffee? No, not even black without sugar, and the same goes for tea. You can drink water.
  - May I chew gum? No, not even sugarless. Gum stimulates your digestive system and can alter test results.
  - May I smoke? No, smoking can affect test results.
  - May I do my exercise routine? No, exercise can also affect test results.
  - What time should I come to the laboratory? Most people find it convenient to stop eating and drinking after 8 p.m. and to arrive at the Outpatient Registration Area early the next morning.