7.3 PREVENTION OF GASTRIC ASPIRATION IN PREGNANT WOMEN

AIM

- To provide guidance on measures to minimise the incidence and consequences of gastric aspiration in peri-operative pregnant women.

BACKGROUND

In pregnancy, anatomical and physiological changes to the gastrointestinal system predispose women to an increased incidence of gastric reflux and regurgitation. This is most apparent beyond 20 weeks gestation. Gastric reflux and regurgitation are risk factors for pulmonary aspiration during general anaesthesia.

KEY POINTS

- Preventative strategies aim to reduce the volume and pH of the stomach contents.

MANAGEMENT

For elective caesarean / surgery fasting requirements: 6 hours for food, 2 hours for clear fluids. For more detailed fasting guidelines see: Clinical Guidelines Section E (Anaesthetics): Fasting guidelines.

All usual anti-reflux medications should be continued throughout the peri-operative period, including when in labour and when fasting.

Patients with gastric bands should have these deflated well in advance of planned surgery.

ELECTIVE CAESAREAN AND ELECTIVE SURGERY DURING PREGNANCY

- **Ranitidine** 300mg orally at least one hour pre-operatively on the day of surgery.

Patients in labour considered at high risk of requiring operative delivery

- Ranitidine 50mg IV 6 hourly for high risk cases as selected by the anaesthetist in consultation with obstetric staff.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS (CAESAREAN, POSTPARTUM PROCEDURES, ETC.)

- **Ranitidine** 50mg IV as soon as possible after notification, if not previously on oral ranitidine.
- **Metoclopramide** 10mg IV as soon as possible after notification.\(^5\)
- 30ml of SODIUM CITRATE mixture orally (0.3 molar solution)\(^5\) shall be given when the woman is on the operating table and immediately prior to induction of general anaesthesia.
REFERENCES (STANDARDS)


National Standards – 1 Clinical care is Guided by Current Best Practice
Legislation - Nil

Related Guidelines / Policies – Section E Anaesthetics
Section B 7 Caesarean Section

Other related documents – Nil

RESPONSIBILITY

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