

Pancreatic Enzymes

The pancreatic enzyme I'm taking is:

I need to take:

_____ pill(s) with each meal

_____ pill(s) with each snack



What are pancreatic enzymes?

Pancreatic enzymes are made by your pancreas to digest (break down) fat, protein, and carbohydrate in your food. A healthy pancreas makes these enzymes every time you eat.

Why do I need to take pancreatic enzymes?

Your body may not make enough of its own pancreatic enzymes.

You may have to take pancreatic enzymes if you have:

- blocked or narrowed pancreatic or biliary ducts
- Cystic Fibrosis
- chronic (ongoing) pancreatitis
- damage to the pancreas

You may also need to take pancreatic enzymes if you had:

- a duodenal or pancreatic tumor
- a gastrectomy or pancreatectomy
- Whipple procedure

If you don't make enough pancreatic enzymes, you may have:

- bad smelling gas or stool
- bloating, gas or stomach cramps
- diarrhea (watery stools)
- greasy (fatty/floating stools)

Over time, this can cause you to lose weight and become dehydrated. Your body may also not get enough vitamins and minerals from the food you eat.

When should I take pancreatic enzymes?

Take your enzymes at the beginning of each meal or snack. For large meals or meals lasting longer than 30 minutes, take half your enzymes at the start of your meal and half in the middle of your meal. If you forget to take your enzymes before you start to eat, you can take them up to 30 minutes after eating.

When taking pancreatic enzymes:

- Follow the directions from your doctor or dietitian. **Don't** crush or chew enzymes unless you are told to.
- You might need to take more enzymes if you eat higher fat foods such as restaurant food, fast food, fried food, cream sauce, gravy, or cheese.
- You don't need to take your enzymes when you eat foods that only have carbohydrates from sugar such as; fruit, candies, juice, jello®, or pop.
- Your stool should start to decrease in amount or size, and be less foul smelling and oily.
- Store your enzymes at room temperature. They may not work as well if kept somewhere warm.

You may not need to take enzymes long term. Talk to your doctor if you have questions.

Important: If your symptoms such as bloating, cramping, diarrhea or constipation don't improve or you continue to lose weight, contact your doctor or dietitian.

