

Dietary information for acute pancreatitis

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

The pancreas is a small organ located behind the stomach and below the ribcage. It has two main functions, making different enzymes and hormones to aid the digestion of food. This includes digestive enzymes that help to break down the macronutrients in food (carbohydrates, protein and fats) into small particles that are more suitable for absorption and also insulin, for regulating our blood glucose.

Acute pancreatitis is a condition where the pancreas becomes inflamed over a short period of time.

It is most commonly caused by gallstones or increased alcohol consumption.

Typical symptoms include:

- Severe abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Indigestion
- Temperature

Acute pancreatitis normally lasts for about a week but for some people (15-20% of cases) they may go on to develop **chronic pancreatitis**. This is when the pancreas is damaged long term, often requiring medication such as insulin and pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy.

Avoidance of alcohol is usually advised for several months. Your consultant/GP will advise you on this fully as it may be that you should avoid alcohol long term.

Dependent on the severity of your symptoms, you may be asked not to eat or drink for 24–48 hours, as this stimulates the pancreas. It is important that this is not continued longer than advised unless there is a clear reason such as vomiting. If no diet is allowed, then enteral nutrition should be considered within 72 hours to ensure that an individual's nutritional requirements can be met to facilitate recovery.

Once your symptoms are better managed, you should be allowed to reintroduce food and fluid as tolerated. When you start diet again, you may find that food/drinks containing a higher fat content may cause more pain for the first few days. To help with this, you should start with a low-fat diet, re-introducing fat containing diet as you can manage them.

Eventually, you should be able to return to a normal well-balanced diet (see the Eat Well Guide for reference; this can be accessed on NHS Choices).

If you have any questions on this, please consult your dietitian.

Low and high fat foods list

Food	Suitable LOW FAT foods	HIGH FAT foods to avoid
Meat	Lean red meats Chicken/turkey (no skin) Gammon	Fried/fatty meats such as bacon, lamb, goose, duck, corned beef, pies, sausages and burgers
Fish	Tinned fish in brine/water/tomato sauce White fish e.g. cod, plaice, haddock	Fish in batter or breadcrumbs
Dairy	Semi skimmed or skimmed milk Low fat cheese such as cottage cheese Low fat yogurt/mousse	Full fat milk i.e. blue top Full fat/thick and creamy yogurts
Eggs	Scrambled, boiled, poached	Fried or scotch egg
Fruit	All fresh, tinned or dried fruit	Avocado
Vegetables	All vegetables or salad	Vegetables that have been roasted in oil/butter
Carbohydrates	Oven chips Jacket/mashed/boiled potato Boiled rice Pasta Noodles All flour is allowed so most breads Breakfast cereals	Ship shop bought chips Waffles Croquettes Crisps Potato salad made on mayonnaise Fried rice or noodles Naan bread, croissants Italian breads
Pulses/lentils	All	None
Spreads	Low fat spread	Butter Cream
Puddings, biscuits, sweets	Jelly Sorbet Meringue iced buns Teacakes Jaffa cakes Rich Tea biscuits Low fat mousse/yogurt with fruit Pastilles to include fruit gums Boiled sweets and jellies Marshmallows Liquorice	Ice-cream Custard Pastry to include Danish pastry Tarts Cakes such as cheesecake/gateaux Doughnuts Sponge Scones Digestives and shortcakes Cream-filled and chocolate biscuits Flapjacks Dumplings

Food	Suitable LOW FAT foods	HIGH FAT foods to avoid
		Chocolate Fudge
Spreads , preserves,	Maple syrup Lemon curd Honey Marmite Bovril	Peanut butter Chocolate spread such as Nutella
Sauces, dressings and seasonings	Tomato ketchup BBQ sauce Salsa Tomato based sauces Pickle Soya sauce Salt and pepper Herbs and spices Instant gravy	Mayonnaise Salad cream Oil based dressings Hummus Tartare sauce Curry sauce Coleslaw Creamy sauces Gravy made from meat juices
Drinks	Drinks made on semi/skimmed milk Water Fruit juice Squash Fizzy drinks	Full cream milk/yogurt based drinks such as smoothies

After an attack of pancreatitis your appetite may be poor. You may have noticed some weight loss so it may be necessary to increase your intake to prevent further weight loss. A handy tip is to have small frequent meals with snacks in between.

Some high calorie – low fat snacks include:

- Jelly
- Toasted tea-cake/toast with low fat spread and jam
- Jelly/boiled sweets
- Fat free sponge cake (without cream)
- Meringue nests with fruit
- Plain biscuits e.g. sugar snaps, rich tea
- Add sugar to drinks
- Tinned fruit in syrup with low fat yogurt/mousse

Nutritional supplementation

If you are struggling to meet your energy and protein needs orally, your dietitian may advise that you start taking oral nutritional supplements. There are a variety of nutritional supplements options so your dietitian will guide you on one that is appropriate for you.

Further information

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the dietetic team.

Nutrition and Dietetic Department
North Devon District Hospital
Barnstaple

Telephone: 01271 322306 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 4pm)

Useful websites

Guts UK! Acute pancreatitis Information Leaflet. Available at:

<https://gutscharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Guts-UK-Acute-Pancreatitis-Leaflet.pdf>

NHS, Acute Pancreatitis. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/acute-pancreatitis/>

References

ESPEN guideline on clinical nutrition in acute and chronic pancreatitis (2020) Available at: https://www.espen.org/files/ESPEN-Guidelines/ESPEN_guideline_on_Clinical_Nutrition_in_acute_and_chronic_pancreatitis.pdf

NICE guideline on Pancreatitis [NG104] Published sep 2018. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng104/resources/pancreatitis-pdf-66141537952453>

Practical guide to the management of acute pancreatitis (2019) Available at: <https://fg.bmj.com/content/flgastro/10/3/292.full.pdf>

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

‘Care Opinion’ comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple
Devon EX31 4JB
Tel. 01271 322577
www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk

© Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust
This leaflet was designed by the Communications Department.
Tel: 01271 313970 / email: ndht.contactus@nhs.net