
Discharge Instructions for Chronic Pancreatitis

You have been diagnosed with long-term (chronic) pancreatitis. This is caused by repeated cases of inflammation of your pancreas. It results in permanent scarring and damage to the pancreatic tissue. The pancreas is an organ that makes chemicals and hormones that help you digest food and use sugar for energy. Some causes of chronic pancreatitis are the continued use of alcohol and tobacco, genetic disorders, cystic fibrosis, autoimmune disorders, and structural problems in the pancreas. Here's what you can do at home to help with your condition.

Home care

Suggestions for home care include the following:

- Ask someone to drive you to appointments until you know how the illness has affected you.
- Tell your health care provider about any medicines you take. This includes over-the-counter medicines and supplements.
- Take your medicines exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Ask your provider about over-the-counter pain medicines, if needed.
- If you are diabetic, learn to keep track of your blood sugar. Keep a record of your readings. Work with your provider to control blood sugar levels.
- Watch for symptoms that your pancreatitis is getting worse. These symptoms include belly (abdominal) pain, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea or oil in your stool, weight loss, and fever.

Diet changes

Suggestions for diet changes include the following:

- Eat a low-fat diet. Ask your health care provider for menus and other diet information.
- Take vitamins A, D, and E, and add calcium to your diet. Your provider can recommend which supplements and dose you need. This depends on your situation.
- Your provider may advise digestive enzymes to take with each meal and snack.
- Stop smoking. Smoking increases problems with chronic pancreatitis.
- Stop drinking, especially if your illness was caused by alcohol.
 - Ask your provider about alcohol abuse programs and support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.
 - Ask your provider about prescription medicines that can help you stop drinking.

Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment, or as advised. Be honest in follow-up appointments about any alcohol and tobacco use. Your providers need complete health information so they can prescribe appropriate treatments.

When to call your doctor

Contact your health care provider or get medical care right away if you have:

- A fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as advised by your provider.
- Severe pain in your upper belly to your back.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Belly swelling and soreness.
- Loss of weight without dieting.