

Pancreatitis Nutrition Plan

Good nutrition, both during a pancreatitis flare and back at home, is important to healing. Nutrition is very important in the treatment of acute pancreatitis, both in the hospital and at home.

What will my child eat in the hospital with pancreatitis?

For the first few days of your child's hospital stay, they will likely have a liquid diet.

Once your child is stable on liquids (usually within 1 to 2 days of hospital stay), a solid food diet is started. The team dietitian will discuss how best to start this for your child.

Getting enough calories early on in your child's pancreatitis course can help reduce length of hospital stay, shorten recovery time, and lower risk of complications.

If your child is not interested in eating because of pain, nausea, or vomiting, they may need some help getting enough energy. To help your child get the calories they need to heal and grow we may recommend:

Oral supplements

These are liquid formulas designed for children that provide excellent nutrition.

A temporary feeding tube

If your child is not interested in eating or drinking or are unable to eat or drink due to pain or vomiting, they can get their nutrition through a small feeding tube for a time. The tube goes in through the nose and down into the stomach.

IV nutrition

Sometimes, children with pancreatitis may need to be given nutrition through an IV while they are in the hospital. Your pancreatitis care team will discuss this with you if your child may need this kind of nutrition.

What should my child eat after leaving the hospital?

We will work with you to help plan your child's best diet at home. Maintaining good nutrition is an important treatment for your child's pancreatitis. Low-fat diets may not be needed.

Eat a balanced diet every day

It is very important for your child to eat a healthy, balanced diet when in a pancreatitis flare, and to maintain the diet once the flare has passed.

The most important goal is that your child is able to eat enough food in the day to meet their nutrition and growth needs. Your pancreatitis team will encourage your child to eat a healthy diet, both during a pancreas flare and when not in a pancreas flare.

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To Learn More

- Gastroenterology
206-987-2521
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Examples of healthy foods

Fresh fruits

- Berries
- Melon
- Kiwifruit
- Oranges

Vegetables

- Carrots
- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes

Whole grains

- Whole wheat bread, crackers, cereal, pasta
- Quinoa
- Oatmeal

Dairy

- Yogurt
- Cheese (hard, soft, or cottage cheese)
- Milk

Healthy fats and proteins

- Eggs
- Chicken
- Tofu
- Salmon
- Beans
- Avocado
- Nuts and nut butters
- Seeds
- Oils (olive, coconut, vegetable, avocado)

Should my child follow a special diet for pancreatitis?

There are many theories about foods that may help your child's condition, but it is very important to stick to the diet your child's dietitian has created.

You may have heard about certain diets that treat pancreatitis, such as a low-fat diet. Our research shows that there is no evidence to support this. A low-fat diet method may only be used in very specific cases. Otherwise, your child will be on a regular diet as recommended by your child's dietitian.

What if my child is still having stomach pain?

We partner with you and your child to prevent and relieve pain as completely as possible. Your child likely will feel pain from a pancreatitis flare. You know your child best. We encourage you to take an active part in your child's recovery by talking with your child's care team about options for your child. No matter the level of their pain, we join you to assess and respond right away. Help your child get better, faster with good pain treatment.