Pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy and Cystic Fibrosis

Who needs Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy?

Pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) is essential for children and young people with cystic fibrosis (CF) who are pancreatic insufficient. PERT helps the body digest and absorb nutrients from foods. Without PERT, children are at risk of poor nutrient absorption leading to poor growth and weight gain.

Dosing PERT

People with CF vary in their degree of pancreatic insufficiency. This means one person may require different amounts of PERT to another. Your dietitian will help you determine your dose.

A good guide for enzyme dosing is:

- 1 scoop of Creon Micro (5000IU) per 3-5g fat
- 1 Creon 10 000 capsule per 6-8g fat
- 1 Creon 25 000 per 15-20g fat

Enzyme doses need to be monitored regularly and adjusted based on amounts of food and fluid consumed. Doses will also be changed if there are signs of malabsorption. These signs include stomach pain, excessive gas, bloating, frequent, loose and / or oily stools, poor weight gain and poor growth.

Capsules and beads should not be crushed or chewed. Beads should be mixed with an acidic food (e.g. fruit puree, fruit gel, jam or tomato sauce) until capsules can be swallowed.

The maximum enzyme dosage is 10 000IU of lipase/kg body weight. Your dietitian can tell you what your maximum daily enzyme dose is.
Are there any foods and fluids that don’t need PERT?

Enzymes need to be taken with ALL food and fluids. The exception is foods that contain mainly simple sugars. Some examples include:

- Fresh, dried and canned fruit
- Non-starchy salad vegetables
- Lollies, jellies, sorbet, Roll-ups
- Fruit juice, cordial, soft drink, electrolyte replacement drinks, water

Remember that while enzymes are dosed according to how much fat is in food, enzymes work on **fat, carbohydrate and protein**. Therefore, they are still needed with foods that are lower in fat such as rice cakes, lean meat, baked beans, plain spaghetti and rice and egg whites.

When should I take the enzymes?

Take pancreatic enzymes immediately before meals/snacks. Enzymes last in the small intestine (where they work) for around 30 minutes. If the child is regularly taking longer than 30 minutes to eat, give half the dose at the start of the feed and the rest half-way through.

How should the enzymes be stored?

Store enzymes in the fridge or in a cool, dry place. Keep enzymes in an opaque container and out of direct light. Discard any enzymes that have been in the sun or left out in the heat.

Do not put enzyme beads in bottles or cups, or down nasogastric tubes or gastrostomies.

Things I can do to improve managing my PERT:

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For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist:

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