

Fact Sheet - Nutrition and Pancreatic Disease

Nutrition is very important for patients with pancreatic disease. There are many times when it is difficult to eat at all. Even when you are feeling well, you still have to be very careful to follow a low-fat diet.

A low-fat diet

These are just guidelines, and, as always, your doctor is the best one to tell you how to eat.

Sometimes it is easier to eat small meals several times a day, instead of trying to sit down to three big meals. The amount of fat you should eat varies depending on your weight and height, but for an average person, it is felt that you should not consume more than 20 grams of fat a day. No one meal should have more than 10 grams of fat. Eating boneless chicken breasts and most fish helps keep your meals low in fat. Cooking with Pam or any cooking spray instead of oils also helps. You can add fat-free chicken broth when you need moisture.

There are many recipes on our website, www.pancreasfoundation.org, that will help you make low-fat meals.

Alcohol and dehydration

If you have pancreatic disease, it is important to never drink alcohol.

Research has shown that dehydration causes the pancreas to flare. Always drink plenty of fluid. It has been recommended that a patient always have a bottle of water or any liquid with them at all times. Drinking Gatorade or other sports drinks is a good way to keep from being dehydrated.

Taking a break

Sometimes it is best to rest the pancreas and limit your food intake. If you are experiencing a flare, your doctor may even recommend no food for a day or two. A diet of clear liquids can be followed when pain is severe. Clear liquids include apple, cranberry and white grape juice, gelatin and broth. The clear liquid diet, however, is not nutritionally complete and the diet should be advanced as soon as additional food is tolerated and according to the schedule given to you by your doctor.



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