

Important Information About Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency (EPI)

What Is EPI?

EPI is a long-lasting medical condition that affects your pancreas.

When you have EPI, your pancreas doesn't make enough proteins, called enzymes. This means your pancreas can't break down the food you eat. As a result, EPI upsets the way your body digests food and causes stomach and bowel problems.¹⁻⁴

What Are the Symptoms of EPI?

Not everyone with EPI has the same symptoms. People with EPI may have one, some, or all of the problems listed below¹⁻⁴:

- Diarrhea
- Losing weight without trying
- Oily and bad-smelling stools called steatorrhea (stee-at-uh-REE-uh)
- Gas and bloating
- Stomach pain

How Is EPI Treated?

If you have EPI, your doctor may prescribe pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) for you. PERT is a medicine that replaces the enzymes your pancreas no longer makes to help you digest your food.²

How Do I Take My PERT?

- Your doctor will personalize your PERT dose based on your weight, diet, and EPI symptoms⁵
- Your daily dose should be divided among each of your 3 meals plus 2 or 3 snacks during the day⁵
- Because PERT has to be taken with food to work right, it's important to take it every day during meals and snacks^{5,6}
- You should see your doctor 2 weeks after you start taking PERT. Your doctor will ask you about how you have been feeling and what foods you have been eating. He or she may change your PERT dose to make sure it is right for you⁵

Are There Side Effects of PERT?

Each type of PERT has its own side effects. Ask your doctor about the possible side effects of your medicine.

Call your doctor if you have any questions about PERT, or aren't sure if you're taking it the right way. Let your doctor know if you think your medicine doesn't seem to be working.

References: 1. Domínguez-Muñoz JE. Pancreatic enzyme therapy for pancreatic exocrine insufficiency. *Curr Gastroenterol Rep.* 2007;9(2):116-122. 2. Ferrone M, Raimondo M, Scolapio JS. Pancreatic enzyme pharmacotherapy. *Pharmacotherapy.* 2007;27(6):910-920. 3. Fieker A, Philpott J, Armand M. Enzyme replacement therapy for pancreatic insufficiency: present and future. *Clin Exp Gastroenterol.* 2011;4:55-73. 4. Sarner M. Treatment of pancreatic exocrine deficiency. *World J Surg.* 2003;27(11):1192-1195. 5. Use of pancreatic enzyme supplements for patients with cystic fibrosis in the context of fibrosing colonopathy. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation website. https://www.cff.org/uploadedFiles/Content/For_Caregivers/Clinical_Care_Guidelines/Nutrition_and_GI_Clinical_Care_Guidelines/Consensus-Statement-Pancreatic-Enzyme-Replacement-March-1995.pdf. Accessed December 15, 2017. 6. Lindkvist B. Diagnosis and treatment of pancreatic exocrine insufficiency. *World J Gastroenterol.* 2013;19(42):7258-7266.