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# **Guide to Pancreatic Enzymes**

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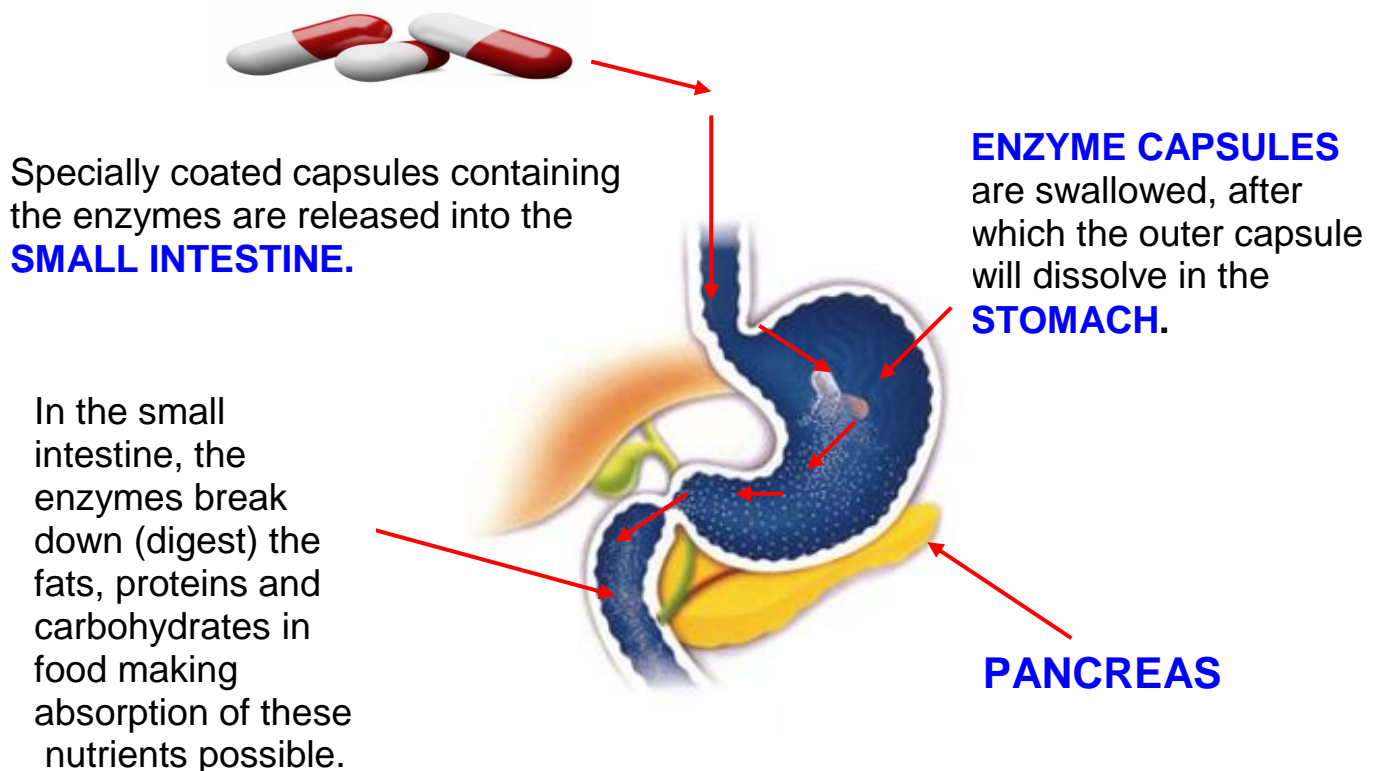
# GUIDE TO PANCREATIC ENZYMES

The pancreas has many functions. In a healthy pancreas one of these functions is to produce digestive enzymes that breakdown the food and fluid we eat to allow absorption.

Pancreatic insufficiency (PI) is common in Cystic Fibrosis and means your pancreas is unable to produce enough digestive enzymes to adequately digest the food or fluid you consume.

If you have been diagnosed with PI then you will be prescribed digestive enzyme medication. These enzymes will digest the food and fluid you consume helping you to stay healthy.

## HOW PANCREATIC ENZYMES WORK



Taking your pancreatic enzymes correctly will ensure you digest your food well. Try to follow these guidelines to maximise the benefits of your pancreatic enzymes.

## **DO**

- ✓ Always swallow the capsule whole Take them before and during meals + snacks.
- ✓ Vary the number of capsules you take according to the fat content and the size of your meal or snack.
- ✓ Take more capsules with fatty foods, e.g. fried foods and takeaways.
- ✓ Take less capsules with low fat foods, e.g.; cereal and

## **DO NOT**

- X Open the capsule up
- X Take them after eating
- X Take the same amount of capsules with all foods.
- X Miss enzymes with snacks.
- X Miss enzymes with milky drinks + supplements.
- X Use enzymes that are out of date.  
milk.
- ✓ Always carry your enzymes with you.

If you answer yes to any of these questions you may be experiencing **symptoms** of **malabsorption**.

**Are there any foods that do not need enzymes? YES!**

**Flushing:** Are they difficult to flush away? iled sweets, pastilles + mints, squash, fizzy pop, tea and coffee (unless made with lots of milk), water, alcohol, fruit juice + fresh fruit.

### **How many enzymes should I take?**

Pancreatic enzymes work slightly differently for everyone.

Bo **Colour:** Are they pale / light in colour?

**Consistency:** Are they loose / greasy?

**Smell:** Are they very smelly?

You will be advised on a dose that is individual to you. You will still need to think about what you are eating and vary your dose according to the fat content of your food.

### **Am I taking the correct amount of enzymes with my food?**

You can assess this by monitoring your bowel habit. Keep a check on the appearance of your stools. You should look for:-

### **WHAT IS MALABSORPTION?**

Malabsorption means you are not digesting and absorbing your food properly.

This can be caused by:

- Not taking enough enzymes.
- Not taking enough enzymes with fatty foods.
- Missing enzymes with meals or snacks.

Malabsorption can make weight gain more difficult and may cause abdominal pain.

Taking the correct enzyme dose may help you to gain weight.

If you have any queries concerning your enzyme dose or symptoms of malabsorption, please contact your CF Team