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Pancreatitis

The pancreas [<https://medlineplus.gov/pancreaticdiseases.html>] is a large gland behind the stomach and close to the first part of the small intestine. It secretes digestive juices into the small intestine through a tube called the pancreatic duct. The pancreas also releases the hormones insulin and glucagon into the bloodstream.


Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas. It happens when digestive enzymes start digesting the pancreas itself. Pancreatitis can be acute or chronic. Either form is serious and can lead to complications.

Acute pancreatitis occurs suddenly and usually goes away in a few days with treatment. It is often caused by **gallstones** [<https://medlineplus.gov/gallstones.html>]. Common symptoms are severe pain in the upper abdomen, nausea, and vomiting. Treatment is usually a few days in the hospital for intravenous (IV) fluids, antibiotics, and medicines to relieve pain.





Chronic pancreatitis does not heal or improve. It gets worse over time and leads to permanent damage. The most common cause is heavy alcohol use [<https://medlineplus.gov/alcoholusedisorderaud.html>]. Other causes include cystic fibrosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/cysticfibrosis.html>] and other inherited disorders, high levels of calcium or fats in the blood, some medicines, and autoimmune conditions [<https://medlineplus.gov/autoimmunediseases.html>]. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, weight loss, and oily stools. Treatment may also be a few days in the hospital for intravenous (IV) fluids, medicines to relieve pain, and nutritional support. After that, you may need to start taking enzymes and eat a special diet. It is also important to not smoke or drink alcohol.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases


Start Here

- **Pancreatitis** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/pancreatitis>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/pancreatitis>]
- **Pancreatitis - What Causes Pancreatitis?** [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/pancreatitis/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/pancreatitis-es/?adfree=true>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- **Amylase Test** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/amylase-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-amilasa/>]
- **Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/endoscopic-retrograde-cholangiopancreatography>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/colangiopancreatografia-retrograda-endoscopica>]
- **Glucagon Blood Test** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/glucagon-blood-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/analisis-de-sangre-de-glucagon/>]
- **Lipase Test** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/lipase-tests/>]  (National Library of Medicine)


Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-lipasa/>]

- Stool Elastase [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/stool-elastase/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/elastasa-fecal/>]


Living With

- Pain Management [<https://pancreasfoundation.org/patient-resources/pain-management/>] (National Pancreas Foundation)

Related Issues

- Biliary Tract Disorders, Gallbladder Disorders, and Gallstone Pancreatitis [<https://gi.org/topics/biliary-tract-disorders-gallbladder-disorders-and-gallstone-pancreatitis/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)
Also in Spanish [<https://gi.org/patients/recursos-en-espanol/trastornos-del-tracto-biliar-trastornos-de-la-vesicula-biliar-y-pancreatitis-por-calculos-biliares/>]
- Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency (EPI) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/exocrine-pancreatic-insufficiency>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/insuficiencia-pancreatica-exocrina>]




Genetics

- Familial and Hereditary Pancreatitis [<https://pancreasfoundation.org/pancreas-disease/familial-and-hereditary-pancreatitis/>] (National Pancreas Foundation) - **PDF**
- Hereditary pancreatitis: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/hereditary-pancreatitis>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Images

- Pancreatitis - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100149_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100149_1.htm]

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pancreatitis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pancreatitis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pancreatitis, Acute Necrotizing [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pancreatitis,+Acute+Necrotizing%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pancreatitis, Chronic [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pancreatitis,+Chronic%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles


References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Effectiveness of Radiomics-Based Machine Learning Models in Differentiating Pancreatitis and Pancreatic... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40744488>]
- Article: Ascites characteristics in acute pancreatitis: A prognostic indicator of organ failure... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40741476>]
- Article: Association of red blood cell distribution width with short- and long-term... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40731314>]
- Pancreatitis -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pancreatitis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

- Power of Your Pancreas: Keep Your Digestive Juices Flowing [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/02/power-your-pancreas>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Find an Expert

- ASGE: Find a Doctor [<https://www.asge.org/find-a-doctor-results>] (American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

Children

- Pancreatitis [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/pancreatitis.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/pancreatitis.html>]
- Pediatric Pancreatitis [<https://pancreasfoundation.org/pancreas-disease/pediatric-pancreatitis/>] (National Pancreas Foundation)

Patient Handouts

- Acute pancreatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000287.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000287.htm>]
- Amylase - blood [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003464.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003464.htm>]
- Chronic pancreatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000221.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000221.htm>]
- ERCP [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007479.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007479.htm>]
- Lipase test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003465.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003465.htm>]
- Pancreatitis - children [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007679.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007679.htm>]
- Pancreatitis - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000201.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000201.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Abdominal CT scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003789.htm>]
- Abdominal MRI scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003796.htm>]
- Abdominal tap [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003896.htm>]

Abdominal ultrasound [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003777.htm>]

Acute pancreatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000287.htm>]

Amylase - blood [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003464.htm>]

Amylase - urine [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003607.htm>]

Chronic pancreatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000221.htm>]

ERCP [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007479.htm>]

Lipase test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003465.htm>]

Pancreatitis - children [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007679.htm>]

Pancreatitis - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000201.htm>]

Pancreatitis - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100149_1.htm]

Percutaneous transhepatic cholangiogram [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003820.htm>]

Trypsin and chymotrypsin in stool [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003594.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Pancreatic Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/pancreaticdiseases.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Pancreatitis* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

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