

Acute Pancreatitis

Pancreatitis is irritation (inflammation) of the pancreas. The pancreas is an organ in the belly that helps with digestion and controlling blood sugar.

Causes

- More common causes – infections, a blockage in the pancreas, some medicines, and belly (abdominal) injury.
- Less common causes – genetic causes and metabolic disorders.
- Sometimes the cause is not known.

Signs and Symptoms

- Stomach pain
- Nausea and throwing up (vomiting)
- Irritability
- Pain, discomfort, or unusual fullness after eating
- Loss of appetite
- Fever of or over 102° Fahrenheit (F) or 38.9° Celsius (C)

Diagnosis

To diagnose pancreatitis, your child's doctor or health care provider will:

- Go over their medical history.
- Do a physical exam.
- Order blood work and/or imaging tests. Your child may be referred to a gastrointestinal (GI) or pancreas specialist.

Treatment of Pancreatitis

Depending on your child's symptoms, their pancreatitis may be managed at home or treated at the hospital.

- If your child can eat, drink, and take medicine by mouth (oral), they may be cared for at home. Their doctor or health care provider will tell you when to follow up.
- Your child may need to be treated at the hospital if they cannot eat, drink, or take medicine orally. At the hospital, they may:
 - Get intravenous (IV) fluids for hydration. An IV is a small, flexible tube placed into a vein.
 - Get oral or IV pain medicine.
 - Have tube feedings if they can't eat by mouth.
 - See the pancreas team.
 - Need imaging scans.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your child's doctor or health care provider if they:

- Will not drink anything for 24 hours.
- Refuse to eat anything for more than 3 days.
- Have a fever of 102°F (38.9°C) or higher.
- Have pain that cannot be controlled with medicine.
- Have behavior changes, like being very tired or hard to wake up.

More Information

See these helpful resources below:

- GI Kids (NASPGHAN) – gikids.org
- National Pancreas Foundation – pancreasfoundation.org
- Animated Pancreas Patient™ – animatedpancreaspatient.com/en-pancreas/home