

WHAT ARE PANCREATIC ENZYMES?

These are capsules that contain a combination of several body-friendly enzymes to help the body digest and absorb necessary nutrients. When these enzymes pass into the stomach, they act like the body's natural enzymes by breaking down food and increasing absorption in the small intestine. In addition, they improve the digestion of foods by helping the body turn fat, protein and starch into the fuel it needs to grow, build muscle and maintain the best possible health.

Enzymes are not drugs, they are supplements. Enzymes need to be taken before eating a meal. They are not dangerous to other children, they do not pose any risk.

At child care, kindergarten, or preschool the school staff may assist with the provision of enzymes. If children are not able to swallow a capsule, the capsule is opened and the beads inside are swallowed with some apple gel or similar

Fruit and vegetables and foods which consist of sugar and no fat (eg. Lollies without chocolate coating or soft drinks) do not require enzymes.



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Starting School with *Cystic Fibrosis*

**AN INFORMATION
GUIDE FOR PARENTS
OF CLASSMATES**



* A student in your child's class has Cystic Fibrosis. Cystic Fibrosis WA has designed this information brochure to increase awareness about the condition and to answer some of the questions you may have*

What Is Cystic Fibrosis



Cystic Fibrosis is the most common life-threatening, recessive genetic condition in Australia. It primarily affects the lungs, digestive system and sweat glands. Cystic Fibrosis is not curable at the moment, however a great deal of resources are being directed towards finding new and improved ways of treating it and working towards finding a cure.

How does Cystic Fibrosis Affect the Body?

In Cystic Fibrosis there is a problem with the protein that controls the movement of salt in and out of the cells. Too much salt in the cells causes mucus to be very thick and sticky and to build up on organs like the lungs

Approximately
1 person in 25
is a carrier of
the recessive
CF gene

One person is
born in
Australia with
Cystic Fibrosis
every 4 days!

SYMPTOMS OF CYSTIC FIBROSIS

- Persistent cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing
- Tiredness, or lethargy or impaired exercise ability
- Frequent visits to the toilet
- Salt loss in hot weather which may produce muscle cramps or weakness
- Poor appetite

LUNGS

When you have Cystic Fibrosis, the mucus produced by the exocrine glands in the lungs is thick and sticky. It clogs the breathing passages and if not cleared, can lead to recurrent lung infections and lung damage.

Everyday, the child with Cystic Fibrosis has to undergo intensive physiotherapy treatment to clear this mucus from his or her lungs.

Although a child with Cystic Fibrosis may cough a lot, it is not contagious. Children with Cystic Fibrosis may grow accustomed to coughing and may not even be aware of it. It is important that they do not suppress this coughing.

Children with Cystic Fibrosis have a low immune system, therefore other children with respiratory illnesses, tummy bugs (gastroenteritis) and chicken pox do represent a health risk to the child with CF

SWEAT GLANDS

People with Cystic Fibrosis do not sweat more than other people but they do lose more salt and potassium in their sweat. The main diagnostic test for Cystic Fibrosis is the sweat test which measures the level of salt in the sweat

Drinking plenty of water is important, particularly throughout summer. It is also important for a child with Cystic Fibrosis to replace the salt they lose in their sweat. They can do this by taking salt tablets, eating salty snacks or drinking glucoLyte or sports drinks which are high in salt



DIGESTION

The pancreas is a gland just below the stomach and one of its functions is to produce enzymes which break down food so that it can be absorbed by the digestive system

In Cystic Fibrosis the sticky mucus can make it difficult for the enzymes to reach the digestive system. As a result the food eaten cannot be fully digested and children with Cystic Fibrosis may have difficulty gaining weight. A diet high in fat is recommended for a child who has Cystic Fibrosis.

It is possible to replace most of the missing enzymes with supplements called pancreatic enzymes.