How to Give Pancreatic Enzymes to an Infant

Follow the instructions in this handout to give pancreatic enzymes to your infant.

Open the enzyme capsule and place the beads in a small dish. Add a small amount of baby applesauce to the beads. Mix well. Use the smallest amount of applesauce needed to mix the beads as your baby will have to finish all of the mixture to receive all of the medicine. You may choose any baby fruit that is acidic (do not use bananas). The acidity allows for the mixture to remain stable so the enzymes do not begin to breakdown.

You may notice your baby pushes the enzymes out of his mouth with his tongue. That is a normal reflex and will soon disappear. Spoon in the enzymes and soon your baby will accept them on the first try.

Once all of the enzymes are gone, give your baby one spoonful of plain applesauce to help clean out any leftover beads. Do a quick finger sweep along the gum line to remove any leftover beads. Check your baby's mouth and gums to make sure there are no beads left. If not removed, the beads may begin to break down and may cause mouth sores. This is especially important if your baby is breast/chest feeding.

Give enzymes just before feeding. The enzymes are effective for about 30 minutes. If a feeding lasts longer than 30 minutes, you should give another dose. If you give the enzymes and your baby does not take as much as usual from the breast/chest or bottle that is fine. If this becomes a pattern, let the CF Center know and your baby's dose may be changed. You may also choose to give half of the dose before the feeding and the rest half way through the feeding.

Please do not change the enzyme dose without talking to the CF Center.

Only use brand name enzymes. Do not use generics.

Common Responses
You may soon notice your baby will have less gas, a decrease in the number of stools per day, and less greasy stools. You may also notice your baby seems more satisfied after a feeding.

If you notice your baby is having an increased number of stools, more gas, or more greasy stools, these are signs of malabsorption. Contact the CF Center and the enzyme dose may be increased.

If you notice enzyme beads in your baby's diaper, that is normal. This often resolves in the first few weeks. It is most likely due to an immature GI system. It could be that the coating on the beads is not being broken down all the way in the small intestine and some of the enzymes are passing through. Do not worry. Your baby is getting most of the enzymes. If this still happens beyond the first few weeks, call the CF Center and the dose may be changed.

If you notice enzyme beads in your baby's diaper, use a lot of diaper cream to prevent skin breakdown on your baby's bottom.

When to Call
Call if you have questions or concerns.

Who to Call
CF Center
608-263-6420 or 1-800-323-8942

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2025. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6128