

Pancreatic Cancer UK

Transcript of 'Diet and pancreatic cancer' information video

Title slide: Diet and pancreatic cancer

Jeni Jones, Specialist Nurse: Hi, I'm Jeni. I'm one of the specialist nurses at Pancreatic Cancer UK. And I provide support and information to all those affected by pancreatic cancer.

Title slide: Why does pancreatic cancer cause problems with diet?

Jeni Jones: The pancreas plays an important part in [digesting food](#). It produces enzymes which help us to break our food down so that it can be used properly by the body. Pancreatic cancer can reduce the number of enzymes a person produces, or it can affect them getting to where they need to be. This can lead to problems with digestion, and absorption of food.

You may have [symptoms](#) such as constipation or diarrhoea. You may get bloating in your tummy, maybe some cramps, feeling full up quickly, so even after eating a few mouthfuls of food. You may lose weight even though you're eating quite well. You may have problems with oily, greasy, pale poo which doesn't flush down the toilet very easily.

Carol, in recovery from pancreatic cancer: I noticed I was becoming malnourished because I was getting very lethargic, I'd lost more weight. I was getting a lot of diarrhoea which was becoming a concern.

Stuart, living with pancreatic cancer: I had very loose stools, I was having to go to the toilet - excuse me, off I go just like that there was no period of grace, I had to go then and there. I was feeling nauseous all the time.

Title slide: How are these symptoms managed?

Jeni Jones: There is something that can be done to help these symptoms. You can take capsules which are called [pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy](#) capsules, and these will replace the enzymes that your pancreas would normally make.

You take pancreatic enzyme capsules each time you eat. They can help to digest your food and help with the symptoms. Some of the common brands that are used are called Creon, Pancrease, Pancrex and Nutrizym.

Stuart: Creon really has changed my life. The one thing that's changed my life. Unfortunately, they're kind of ungainly pills to swallow and I have to take six or seven or eight every meal. But that's a small price to pay for having virtually a symptom free life now.

Title slide: Who can help you manage your symptoms?

Jeni Jones: Your doctor or nurse can help you manage your symptoms. Pancreatic cancer can make managing diet quite tricky. So it might be helpful to ask for a referral to a [specialist dietitian](#). A dietitian is a professional who provides expert advice about diet and nutrition. They can talk to you about pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy and how to manage your diet and nutrition.

Pancreatic cancer can also cause [diabetes](#), which can cause your blood sugars to become high. The dietitian can also help you to manage these symptoms.

A dietitian can support you in making changes to your diet if you're losing weight. They can discuss how to add [more calories and protein](#) into the food that you're eating.

If you haven't seen a specialist dietitian, speak to your doctor or nurse and they may be able to arrange a referral for you. Not every hospital will have a specialist pancreatic dietitian, but they will have other dietitians who may be able to talk to you about your symptoms.

Carol: Most people when they seek a dietitian, the dietitian will advise you on a healthy diet, a balanced diet of calories, proteins, etc. but going through treatment, a dietitian will tell you - gain as many calories and consume as many calories as you possibly can. Seeing my dietitian was eye opening. They gave me fantastic advice about richer foods to eat, upping the dose of the enzymes, where I could consume more calories by my favourite foods.

Jeni Jones: On the Pancreatic Cancer UK website we have a lot of information about [diet and pancreatic cancer](#). This also includes some very good information about [pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy](#).

Pancreatic Cancer UK also run a [Support Line](#), which is manned by specialist nurses. We can help you with advice about your symptoms and also in speaking to your medical team. You can call us on **0808 801 0707** or you can email us on **nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk**