

Giving Pancreatic Enzymes to Infants and Children

What is the purpose of pancreatic enzymes?

- Pancreatic enzymes help infants and young children digest carbohydrates, protein and fat from breast milk, formula, milk, and food.
- Pancreatic enzymes, along with a healthy diet, are needed for weight gain, growth and development.

What do pancreatic enzymes look like?

- Pancreatic enzymes come in a capsule that contains tiny beads.
- Infants and young children will not be able to swallow an enzyme capsule.
- Give infants and young children only the beads inside the capsule until they are old enough to swallow the capsule (usually around age 4 or older).

How do I prepare the enzymes beads to give to my infant or child?

- Place the spoon on a clean, flat surface.
 - For infants, use a soft shallow tapered baby-feeding spoon. These are a good option because of spoon size.
 - For a young child, use a regular teaspoon, same as you use to feed him applesauce or yogurt.
- Place a small amount of applesauce (about the size of an adult thumbnail) onto the spoon.
 - For infants, use baby applesauce. Start with Stage 1.
 - For older infants and young children who can eat table food, you can use regular applesauce.
- Hold enzyme capsule so that all of the beads are in the bottom half of the capsule.
 - The size and amount of beads in each capsule vary based on the name brand.
- Open the capsule by twisting the top half of the capsule to remove it.
 - Be careful not to spill the beads.
- Pour all of the beads onto the applesauce in the spoon.



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How do I give enzymes to my infant or young child?

- Give the applesauce-enzyme mixture on the spoon to your child right before a feeding.
- If your child spits out the applesauce-enzyme mixture try again. Scoop up what he spit out of his mouth and give that as well.
- Give your child enough breast milk/formula/milk to swallow the enzyme beads.
- Your child's ability to swallow the enzymes will improve after a few days.

Important tips:

- Store enzymes in a cool, dry place.
- Your health care team will tell you how many enzymes to give with each feeding. The dose will change as your child grows.
- Do not crush enzyme beads.
- Do not chew enzyme beads.
- Enzymes beads are activated when they are exposed to air or mixed with food.
- For best results:
 - open capsule
 - mix with applesauce
 - give right before a feeding
 - **Do not mix ahead and store.**
- Give the enzymes **before every feeding** of breast milk, formula or food.
- Give the enzymes in applesauce.
 - Applesauce has the right acidity for enzymes.
 - It creates a routine for your child.
 - If you try to hide the enzymes in different foods, your child may learn to resist food in general, believing all foods contain medication.
- If feedings take longer than 20 minutes, talk to your health care team about giving half the enzyme dose before the feed and then mid-way in the feeding.
- Only use the brand name enzyme and dose ordered by your health care team.
- Please contact your health care team if you have any questions or concerns about your child's enzyme schedule.
 - dosage
 - time frame
 - brand name

Special considerations to avoid skin breakdown:

- Infants:
 - Enzyme beads that stay in and around an infant's mouth can cause mouth sores. After each feeding, wrap a piece of gauze or a clean cloth around your index finger. Check your infant's mouth. Wipe around his lips, gums and under his tongue.
- Breastfeeding mothers:
 - Check your nipples after each feeding. Remove any enzymes left on your skin.
- Infants and young children in diapers:
 - Enzyme beads that remain on your child's bottom and skin folds can cause a rash. Check the diaper area for any enzymes. Use a "barrier" cream (such as Desitin) with each diaper change. This will keep the enzyme beads off your child's skin.