Clinical considerations and potential outcomes

PEI can occur in several distinct patient groups.¹ This brochure provides details on the most common symptoms you should look out for, patients who are at the greatest risk of developing PEI, and the importance of treatment.

Know the symptoms and implications—THINK PEI.
PEI: A CAUSE OF MALNUTRITION

The pancreas plays an important role in maintaining effective digestion and nutrient absorption through the secretion of specific enzymes.\(^1,2\) PEI occurs when the pancreas fails to secrete sufficient amounts of these enzymes to maintain normal digestive processes, resulting in fat malabsorption and malabsorption.\(^1,2,3\)

Patients may present with a variety of symptoms:
- Abdominal pain
- Flatulence
- Lack of weight gain in children
- Weight loss in adults
- Loose stools
- Steatorrhea (Greasy, foul-smelling stools)

Pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) is recommended as the FIRST-LINE treatment for PEI.\(^1\)
PEI OCCURS AS A RESULT OF SEVERAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Prevalence of mild to moderate PEI in various patient populations

- **CYSTIC FIBROSIS** 55–100%
- **CHRONIC PANCREATITIS** 80–90%
- **HIV** 23–54%
- **TYPE 1 DIABETES** 26–44%
- **CELIAC DISEASE** 15–40%

Pooled analysis of prevalence data from studies that assessed PEI in various patient populations. PEI was defined as ≤200 mcg elastase/1 g stool. HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

### Characterization of Chronic Pancreatitis (CP)

- Persistent or recurrent episodes of epigastric and left upper quadrant pain
- Anorexia, nausea, vomiting, constipation, flatulence and weight loss are common

- **Alcoholism**
  - Most common cause of CP
  - May occur with prolonged consumption of as little as ≤50 g/d
- **Tobacco Smoking**
  - Risk factor for CP
  - Can accelerate progression of alcoholic CP
- **Obstruction**
  - Obstruction of pancreatic duct by stricture, stone, or tumour

When treating any of these patients, remember to THINK PEI.
CLINICAL CONSEQUENCES OF PEI

PEI is not just associated with gastrointestinal complaints. Left untreated it may be associated with malnutrition-related morbidity and increased risk of mortality.⁹

Without adequate treatment PEI can lead to:¹³

- Vitamin deficiency
- Malnutrition
- Reduced bone mineral density
- Increased risk of cardiovascular events
- Increased risk of mortality

If your patients are presenting with any of the symptoms discussed in this brochure, be sure to THINK PEI.


For more information on PEI, visit thinkpei.ca