PERSPECTIVE

Improving Digestive Function in Pancreatic Cancer through Appropriate Enzyme Therapy

Kenji Nakamura*

Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Sakura Medical University, Tokyo, Japan

DESCRIPTION

Pancreatic cancer is a serious illness that is often accompanied by digestive and nutritional problems that significantly affect daily life. The pancreas is a vital organ located deep in the abdomen, positioned behind the stomach and it performs two main functions. One function helps regulate blood sugar levels, while the other supports digestion by releasing enzymes into the small intestine. In individuals with pancreatic cancer, this digestive function is commonly impaired due to blockage of the pancreatic duct, damage to enzyme-producing tissue or removal of part of the pancreas during surgery. As a result, many patients develop pancreatic exocrine insufficiency, making the rational use of pancreatic enzyme therapy an essential component of care. Digestive enzymes released by the pancreas are responsible for breaking down fats, carbohydrates and proteins from food so they can be absorbed by the intestine. When the pancreas cannot release enough of these enzymes, food passes through the digestive tract without being properly digested. This leads to symptoms such as bulky or oily stools, abdominal discomfort, bloating, excessive gas, poor appetite and ongoing weight loss. Over time, deficiencies of important vitamins may also develop. In people with pancreatic cancer, these issues often coexist with pain, fatigue and the side effects of cancer treatment, increasing physical and emotional strain.

Rational prescribing of pancreatic enzymes begins with recognizing symptoms of poor digestion early. Clinical features such as changes in stool appearance, increased bowel movements after meals and unintended weight loss are strong indicators of enzyme deficiency. Although certain tests can help confirm the diagnosis, waiting for test results may delay relief. In patients with tumors involving the head of the pancreas, digestive problems are especially common because the flow of pancreatic juice into the intestine is frequently obstructed. In such cases, starting enzyme therapy based on symptoms alone is often appropriate. The choice of enzyme preparation plays an important role in treatment success. Most pancreatic enzyme products contain a combination of digestive enzymes obtained from natural sources. These products are designed to survive stomach acid and release enzymes in the small intestine, where digestion occurs. Capsules usually contain small coated particles that mix with food as it leaves the stomach. Prescribing products that lack adequate protection from stomach acid may result in reduced effectiveness and persistent symptoms, even when the dose appears sufficient.

Determining the correct dose requires individual assessment rather than a fixed approach. Enzyme doses are commonly adjusted according to the fat content of meals with higher doses taken during main meals and smaller doses with snacks. Many patients receive doses that are too low leading to ongoing digestive symptoms that could be mistaken for disease progression. Increasing the dose gradually while monitoring symptoms is a practical and effective strategy. Very high doses, however, do not provide additional benefit and may unnecessarily increase treatment costs. Correct timing of enzyme intake is equally important. Enzymes should be taken with food so that they are present in the intestine at the same time as the meal. Taking capsules before or after eating may reduce their effectiveness. For longer meals, splitting the dose during the meal can improve digestion. Patients should also be advised not to crush or chew the capsules, as this can damage the protective coating and reduce enzyme activity. Clear instructions and regular counseling help ensure proper use and improve outcomes.

Evaluation of treatment effectiveness is mainly based on symptom relief and nutritional improvement. Firmer stools, reduced bloating, improved appetite and stabilization of body weight suggest adequate enzyme replacement. Improvement in overall energy levels and tolerance to cancer treatments may also be observed. If symptoms continue, healthcare providers should assess adherence, dosing, meal patterns and the possible need for medications that reduce stomach acid to support enzyme action. It also involves integrating enzyme therapy into the broader management of pancreatic cancer. Poor digestion can worsen weakness, increase susceptibility to infections and reduce tolerance to chemotherapy or radiation

Received: 01-Dec-2025, Manuscript No IPP-25-23283; **Editor Assigned:** 03-Dec-2025, PreQC No IPP-25-23283 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 17-Dec-2025, QC No IPP-25-23283; **Revised:** 23-Dec-2025, Manuscript No IPP-25-23283 (R); **Published:** 31-Dec-2025, DOI: 10.36648/1590-8577.26.6.949

Correspondence Kenji Nakamura

Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Sakura Medical University, Tokyo, Japan

E-mail kenji.nakamura@ac.jp

Citation: Nakamura K (2025) Improving Digestive Function in Pancreatic Cancer through Appropriate Enzyme Therapy. J Pancreas. 26:949.

therapy. Addressing enzyme deficiency can therefore improve physical strength and daily comfort, even in advanced stages of disease. Enzyme therapy should be viewed as supportive care that directly influences quality of life rather than as an optional add-on.

Cost considerations are particularly important, as enzyme therapy is often required for long periods. Unnecessary dose escalation or inappropriate continuation can place a financial burden on patients. Regular review of treatment response helps ensure that therapy remains both effective and responsible. At the same time, insufficient dosing due to cost concerns may lead to malnutrition and further decline, highlighting the need for balanced clinical decisions. In conclusion, pancreatic enzyme therapy is a valuable tool in managing digestive problems associated with pancreatic cancer. Its success depends on early recognition of symptoms, appropriate product selection, individualized dosing, correct timing with meals and continuous evaluation. When prescribed thoughtfully, pancreatic enzymes can improve digestion, support nutrition and enhance overall well-being in individuals affected by diseases of the pancreas.

Citation: Nakamura K (2025) Improving Digestive Function in Pancreatic Cancer through Appropriate Enzyme Therapy. J Pancreas. 26:949.