Your guide to...

Preparing for your appointment

Use this guide to feel comfortable, confident and prepared when talking to your healthcare team about your condition or symptoms.

Your pancreas plays a vital role in your digestive system, and taking care of it starts with listening to your body. Whether you are experiencing new, unexplained symptoms or managing ongoing changes, speaking to your doctor can sometimes feel overwhelming. Remember, your doctor is there to listen, support and help you find answers. You are never alone and your health matters.

Red flag symptoms: When to seek help

Symptoms to get checked immediately:

- Severe abdominal pain that comes on suddenly often spreading to your back.
- High fever, feeling shivery or sudden sweating, accompanied by severe pain.
- A rapid heartbeat or difficulty breathing/shortness of breath.
- Continuous vomiting or inability to keep fluids down.
- Yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes (jaundice).

If you are experiencing any of these, it is important to seek medical advice **immediately** by calling **999**.

Symptoms to get checked as soon as possible:

- Persistent or recurring pain in your upper abdomen or back.
- Unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite.
- Changes in your poo such as pale, greasy or foul-smelling poo that is difficult to flush.
- Frequent indigestion, nausea, bloating or feeling uncomfortably full after eating.
- Persistent fatigue or weakness.

Contact your GP or NHS 111.



Appointment preparation

Checklist

- [ ] **1. Track your symptoms:** Note down when your pain or discomfort occurs, how severe it is, and whether it seems linked to eating or drinking, especially oily/fatty foods or alcohol. Note any changes in your poo or digestion. The more details you share, the better equipped your doctor will be to help, so track your symptoms for several days before your appointment if you can.

- [ ] **2. Prioritise your questions and worries:** Decide what you want to achieve at your appointment. Are you looking for a diagnosis, a referral to a gastroenterologist, pain management advice or further diagnostic tests like blood tests or scans?

- [ ] **3. Bring someone with you:** If you feel anxious about remembering details, ask someone you trust to join you. Making notes in your appointment can also help you to remember what was discussed.

Starting the conversation...

If you're unsure how to bring up your symptoms, try using one of these conversation starters:

"I've been having ongoing pain in my upper stomach and back, and I'm concerned it might be related to my pancreas."

"I've been tracking my symptoms for a few weeks, particularly after eating, and I'd like to run through what I've logged with you."

"I've noticed changes in my digestion and poo recently, alongside weight loss, and I'd like to get this checked out."



Your appointment notes

Use this space to write down your notes before or during your appointment.



When I go to my appointment, I want to mention:

When I go to my appointment, I want to ask:

What the doctor said and next steps:

(For example: tests, referral, dietary advice, pain relief or follow-up needed).

Useful questions to ask your doctor:

- What do you think could be causing my abdominal pain or changes in my digestion?
- Could this be acute or chronic pancreatitis, or something else?
- Do I need any blood tests, poo tests, or imaging scans such as an ultrasound or CT scan?
- Should I be referred to a pancreas specialist or gastroenterology team?
- Are there dietary adjustments or enzyme replacements that could help my digestion?
- What should I do if my pain gets worse before my next appointment?



Learn more and take action

Guts UK is the only UK charity funding a research fellowship into pancreatitis.
Our digestive systems have been underfunded and misunderstood for decades. We're here to change that.

Download resources

Head to gutscharity.org.uk/kranky-panky to download our free, reliable resources and learn more about pancreatitis.

Join us on socials

Search @gutscharityuk on social media to join the #KrankyPanky campaign.

Support our work

Donate today at gutscharity.org.uk/donate to help improve the lives of millions affected by digestive conditions and symptoms like pancreatitis.

Need more information on your digestive condition or symptoms?
Guts UK is the national charity for the digestive system. For information and guidance, go to **gutscharity.org.uk/information.**

Need support? Contact our Helpline on 0300 102 4887 or gutscharity.org.uk/helpline.

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