

Chronic Pancreatitis



KANAKIA
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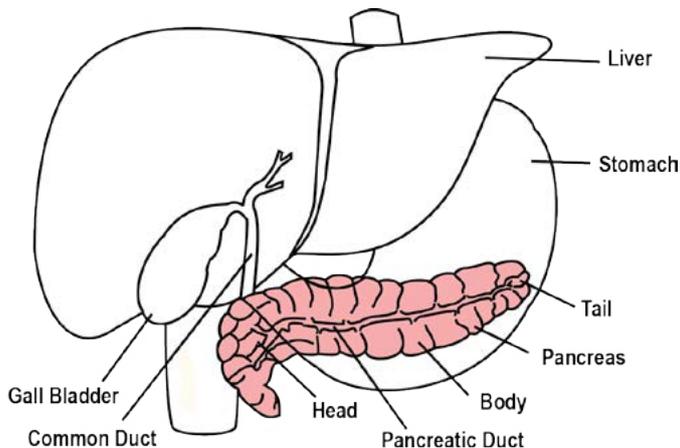
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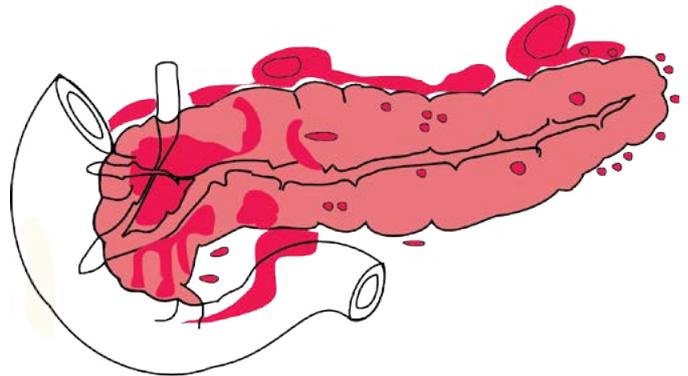
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What is the pancreas?

The pancreas is an endocrine as well as digestive gland, situated between the stomach and backbone. It is around 6-8 inches in length. It makes a mixture called the pancreatic juice which contains enzymes to digest proteins, starch and carbohydrates, fats and other nutrients. It also helps in absorption of nutrients. The pancreas has another important function, which is making insulin. The pancreas consists of the head, body and tail.



of the damage the pancreas cannot function normally.



Development of Chronic Pancreatitis

What are the causes of chronic pancreatitis?

- Alcohol abuse (most common)
- Hereditary pancreatitis
- Blockage of the pancreatic duct due to trauma, stones, tumors
- Other rare diseases

What are the symptoms of chronic pancreatitis?

- Constant long-standing pain in the upper part /middle of the abdomen which spreads to the back. There may be sudden worsening of pain. The pain worsens after a meal and there is some relief while bending/leaning forward.
- Weight loss
- Diarrhea with loose, greasy, foul-smelling stools
- Diabetes
- Nausea, vomiting
- Jaundice

What is pancreatitis?

The inflammation of the pancreas is called pancreatitis. It causes sudden severe abdominal pain. It could be acute or chronic.

What is chronic pancreatitis?

Long standing ongoing inflammation of the pancreas causes irreversible damage and leads to chronic pancreatitis. Because

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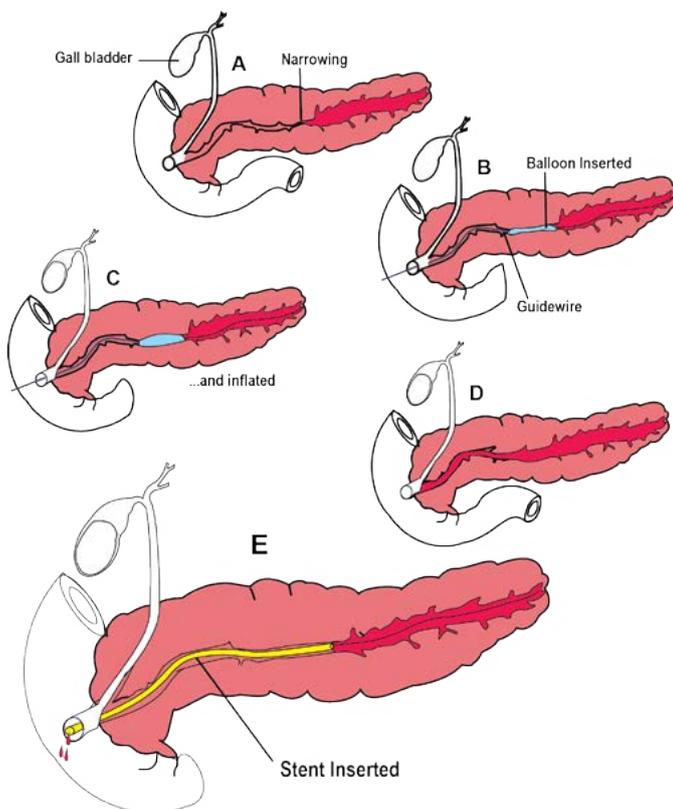
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Chronic Pancreatitis

What are the complications of chronic pancreatitis?

- Jaundice due to the blockage of the common duct between the gall bladder and pancreas.
- Formation of pseudocyst i.e. a sac containing fluid which may give rise to bloating, discomfort, pain and may rupture or burst open. It may also get infected.
- An increased risk of pancreatic cancer
- Diabetes may result when the pancreas is damaged because certain cells in the pancreas are responsible for the production of insulin.



What are the tests to diagnose chronic pancreatitis?

Diagnosis rests on the following:

- Blood tests to see increase in the levels of pancreatic enzymes, and to detect pancreatic cancer CEA and CA19/9
- Stool tests to detect fat in the stools
- X-ray, ultrasound, CT scan, MRI
- Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)

What is the treatment for chronic pancreatitis?

- Pain relief with simple measures or narcotic analgesics
- Low fat diet, but adequate in nutrition
- Medications given include pancreatic enzymes and insulin
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Surgery to relieve the blockade and pressure in the pancreas and alleviate the pain. Partial removal of the pancreas and other experimental surgeries.
- Nerve blocks
- Stenting – This is a procedure done to widen a narrow pancreatic duct and to place a small tube or a stent to keep it open and to allow drainage of the pancreatic juices.