

Supporting the Pancreas

Foods to consider adding to your diet for supporting pancreas function are:

Complex carbohydrates

For problems in the pancreas including pancreatitis eat:

Foods low in fat and sugar

Avoid large meals consisting of mostly simple carbohydrates, sugars, alcohol, caffeine, and soft drinks

Try to decrease stress

Herbs that can be helpful in supporting the pancreas

Burdock Root Dandelion Root

Gymnema Fennugreek

Red Clover

Often there is more than one issue going on in the body at any one time. Everything is connected and sometimes the body needs to work in a prioritizing sequence. Don't be alarmed if multiple supplements are suggested. It can be very beneficial to support several different systems and organs of the body as we assist it to heal.

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So what does my Pancreas do?

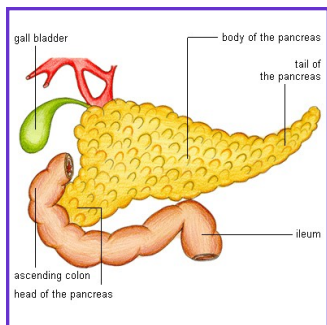
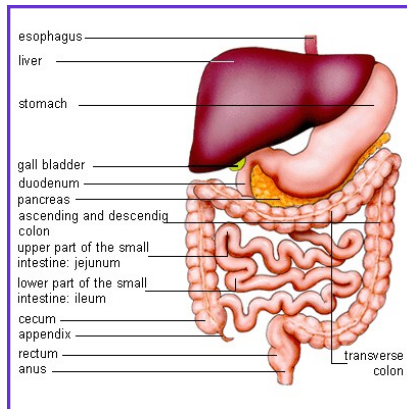
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Pancreas

Where is it and what does it do?

The pancreas is a 5-6 inch leaf-shaped gland situated behind part of the stomach and extending downwards towards the spleen and left kidney. It has two primary functions. The first function is to produce and secrete digestive enzymes that break down proteins, fat and carbohydrates in the small intestine. Secondly, it releases the hormones insulin, which is necessary for the conversion of glucose (blood sugar) to glycogen (stored sugar), and glucagon, which converts glycogen back to blood sugar as needed.



Hyperglycemia - High Blood Sugar- Diabetes

Diabetes occurs when the pancreas cannot produce or cells cannot properly use the pancreatic hormone insulin. In persons with diabetes, glucose builds up in the blood stream instead of being taken to the cells to be used for energy. All cells need glucose. The brain's only food source is glucose. If not properly controlled, diabetes can lead to heart disease, kidney disease, edema, nerve damage, and infections of the mouth, gums, lungs, skin, feet, bladder and genital areas. Skin sores may develop and fail to heal properly.

Hypoglycemia-Low Blood Sugar

Hypoglycemia is a condition in which there is an abnormally low level of glucose in the blood. Reactive hypoglycemia occurs when the glucose level drops abnormally low 2-5 hours after eating a meal. Symptoms include: sweating, tremors, rapid heartbeat, anxiety and hunger. This occurs when the pancreas secretes too much insulin. If the pancreas is not functioning properly it is impossible to metabolize carbohydrates.

A condition called "fasting hypoglycemia" occurs when a person does not eat for more than 8 hours. This is different from a person doing an intentional fast. Symptoms are more severe and can include: seizures, loss of consciousness and loss of mental acuity. Liver disease or a tumor on the pancreas is normally the cause of this disease.

Persons suffering from hypoglycemia may have the following symptoms: fatigue, dizziness, heart palpitations, nausea, blurred vision, inability to concentrate, light-headedness, irritability, fainting, depression, night sweats, nervousness, anxiety, craving for sweets, confusion, feeling of tightness in

chest, constant hunger, weakness in legs, swollen feet, pain in various parts of the body, (especially the eyes), nervous habits, mental disturbances and insomnia. People with hypoglycemia can become very aggressive and short tempered.

Diet

Diet is crucial for people who struggle with hypoglycemia. Eating meals that mainly consist of refined, processed foods, or foods with a high glycemic index, is harmful. These foods quickly turn to sugar in the body and cause the pancreas to "dump" large amounts of insulin into the body. This lowers the blood sugar drastically and causes a hypoglycemic effect where a person "crashes". Eating complex carbohydrates and protein together in small frequent meals is preferred.

Pancreatitis

Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas. The pancreas can become inflamed if digestive enzymes build up inside it and begin to attack it. Acute pancreatitis can be a result of excessive alcohol use or gallstones. It can also be the result of infection, such as hepatitis, or from the use of certain drugs. Symptoms of acute pancreatitis include: nausea and vomiting and severe pain that comes on suddenly starting at the area around the navel and radiating to the back. This pain is exacerbated by movement and relieved by sitting. Other symptoms include upper abdominal swelling and distention, excessive gas, pain that is burning or stabbing, fever, sweating, hypertension, muscle aches and abnormal fatty stools.