

Acute inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis)

Acute pancreatitis can be caused by alcohol or gallstones. Heavy alcohol use causes 70 %, and gallstones cause 20 % of all pancreatitis, but in some cases, an obvious reason for the inflammation cannot be diagnosed. The most common symptom of pancreatitis is a pressing pain in the upper abdomen, and it can radiate to the back. In a severe pancreatitis, your breathing is shallow and you may have trouble urinating.

Treatment

- Acute pancreatitis can be treated with heavy intravenous hydration and sufficient pain control.
- The effects of treatment are measured by monitoring, for example, your urinating, blood circulation, breathing and laboratory values.
- Your blood sugar levels are monitored during your hospital treatment, because severe pancreatitis can cause diabetes, and your blood sugar levels need to be reduced medically.

After Hospital Treatment

- Most pancreatitis can be prevented by avoiding heavy alcohol use.
- Moderate use (1 to 2 portions a day) does not increase the probability of pancreatitis, but if you have been diagnosed with pancreatitis once, even a small amount of alcohol can cause a new inflammation.
- If your pancreatitis has been caused by gallstones, your gallbladder can be removed surgically (cholecystectomy).

If you experience difficulties, please contact your treatment unit or your regional emergency clinic.