**Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy (PERT) Shortage information for patients**

**Advice for Patients:**

**Why is this guidance needed?**

In the UK at present there is a shortage of a type of medicine called pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) that some people need to help them digest food properly. This medicine is important for people whose pancreas, an organ in the body, doesn't make enough enzymes.  Enzymes help the body break down food so it can be used for energy. The shortage happened because there have been problems manufacturing enough of this medicine, and it’s been hard to get the ingredients needed to produce it. This has made it difficult for some people to get the medicine they need, so Humber and North Yorkshire ICB, along with community pharmacies, hospitals and GP practices are working on finding other solutions to help people get the medication they need until the shortage is over. The shortages of some PERT medicines are expected to last until 2027. We understand the anxiety the current supply issues are causing and are working to help everyone who needs pancreatic enzymes (PERT) to get the medications they need.

**What should I do if I am having problems getting my PERT prescription?**

* Place your prescription request 2 weeks earlier than usual to give your community pharmacy time to source your medication.
* Your GP should provide your PERT prescription as a single item on a prescription – this allows you to take the prescription token to different pharmacies if there is available stock.
* Some community pharmacies have online stock checking services, which may be helpful. Call ahead to confirm stock before making a special visit to a pharmacy.
* If your pharmacy let you know your PERT is out of stock please ask them to order it anyway so the order is logged and will be filled when the next shipment of PERT arrives in the UK.
* Let your GP know if you are not able to get a prescription filled and have only 10 days’ supply of PERT remaining. There is now a process available to access imported medication. You may be prescribed a different product which is equivalent to your usual PERT. Please talk to your community pharmacist about any queries.

**Other important points**

* To help the enzymes work best remember to take your PERT throughout your meals rather than all at the start, middle or end.
* Don’t stockpile medications – this makes supply issues worse for everyone. GPs have been advised by the Department for Health to issue prescriptions for 1 month’s supply of PERT at a time.
* Do not borrow or share medication with other patients or buy medication on the internet.

**Where to get further information**

There are specialist support lines available where you can speak to nurses for advice and guidance through organisations like [Pancreatic Cancer UK](https://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/news-and-blogs/information-about-the-supply-of-creon-25000/) or the [Cystic Fibrosis Trust](https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/what-is-cystic-fibrosis/cystic-fibrosis-care/treatments-and-medication/creon-supply-update).

[There is further guidance here](https://www.psgbi.org/media/resources/Position_Statement_Shortage_of_PERT_Patient_Advice_Version_3_24th_June_2024_1.pdf) if you are an adult having trouble accessing PERT on how to minimise the impact on your symptoms and quality of life should you be unable to access your normal supply of PERT. This resource is not suitable for children or those with cystic fibrosis.