

Help your patients open up about all of their GI Symptoms

This discussion guide can help facilitate a conversation with patients who are experiencing GI symptoms. Initially, some patients may not be comfortable describing the details of their symptoms. You can make it easier for them by encouraging them to share the details of any and all symptoms they may be experiencing.

If your patient presents with one or more symptoms of exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI), which include frequent diarrhea, unexplained weight loss, steatorrhea, gas, bloating, and abdominal pain, consider EPI in your differential diagnosis.



These questions can be a good starting point to encourage further dialogue.

URGENCY/ FREQUENCY

- ▶ How urgently do you need to have bowel movements?
How frequently does this occur?
- ▶ Do you wake in the middle of the night to have a bowel movement?
How frequently does this occur?

STOOL DETAILS

- ▶ How would you describe your stool?
- ▶ Is your stool loose?
- ▶ Does it float?
- ▶ Is it greasy?
- ▶ Is the color pale?
- ▶ Does it smell very foul?
- ▶ Is it difficult to flush?
- ▶ Have you noticed droplets of oil in your toilet?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Could you tell me about your experience with gas and bloating?
How frequently do you feel this way?
- ▶ Have you had unexplained weight loss?
- ▶ Do you have abdominal pain? When does this occur?
- ▶ Could you describe to me what you ate yesterday?

In addition to describing symptoms, it may be helpful to show patients an example image of steatorrhea. Not all patients experience this symptom. Encourage patients to visit educational websites like [IdentifyEPI.com](https://www.identifyEPI.com) so they will better understand their condition.

When you diagnose patients with EPI, provide them with the GI Symptom Tracker and follow up 2 weeks later to evaluate symptoms and treatment progress.

You can help patients understand the impact treatment is having on their GI symptoms by having them fill out the GI Symptom Tracker

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