



References

www.cancer.org/cancer/pancreatic-cancer.html

www.pancan.org

Facing PANCREATIC CANCER

**start
here**

What can I do today

Ask Your Health Care Team About Pancreatic Cancer

It's important to have honest, open discussions with your cancer care team. You should feel free to ask any question, no matter how minor it might seem. For instance, consider these questions:

When you're told you have pancreatic cancer:

- What kind of pancreatic cancer do I have?
- Has my cancer spread beyond where it started?
- What is the stage of my cancer? Is it resectable (removable by surgery)?
- Do I need any other tests before we can decide on treatment?
- Will I need to see other doctors?
- If I'm concerned about the costs and insurance coverage for my diagnosis and treatment, who can help me?

Pancreatic cancer can be treated with surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, palliative care, or a combination of these. Treatment options are partly based on the cancer stage. Surgery is the only treatment that can cure pancreatic adenocarcinoma, and may also be done to improve quality of life without the potential for cure. Pain management and medications to improve digestion are sometimes needed. Early palliative care is recommended even for those receiving treatment that aims for a cure.

Stay at a healthy weight

Good nutritional care improves outcomes and is critical for your quality of life. Pancreatic cancer researchers strongly recommend that patients have access to pancreatic enzymes and see a registered dietitian. Eat a healthy diet, with an emphasis on plant foods. This includes at least 2½ cups of vegetables and fruits every day. Choose whole-grain breads, pastas, and cereals instead of refined grains, and eat fish, poultry, or beans instead of processed meat and red meat.

Making the healthiest choices possible to maintain good nutrition can help patients minimize the side effects of treatment, recover from surgery and maintain the best quality of life.

What is pancreatic cancer

Pancreatic Cancer starts when cells in pancreas, a glandular organ behind the stomach, begin to grow out of control and form a tumor. These cancerous cells have the ability to invade other parts of the body.

There are a number of types of pancreatic cancer. The most common, **pancreatic adenocarcinoma**, accounts for about **90% of cases**, and the term "pancreatic cancer" is sometimes used to refer only to that type.

Treatment

Discuss your treatment goals with your healthcare team and know all of your options at every stage of your disease.

- **Clinical Trials:** Pancreatic cancer patients who participate in clinical research have better outcomes. Every treatment available today was approved through a clinical trial. *The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network* maintains the most comprehensive database of available pancreatic cancer clinical trials in the United States.
- **Pancreatic Cancer Surgery:** it is recommended to see a surgeon who performs a high volume of pancreatic cancer surgeries to determine eligibility.
- **Personalized Medicine:** the molecular profile of your tumor can help to determine the best treatment options.
- **Types of Therapy:** may include chemotherapy, targeted therapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, complementary and alternative medicine.

Staging

Staging is the process the doctor uses to determine the extent of the cancer in the body. Determine the stage, which helps to determine the prognosis and best course of treatment. There are two ways to describe the stages of pancreatic cancer:

- **Stage number:** indicates the size and location of the cancer. Pancreatic cancers are staged on a scale of 0 to 4, from early (stage 1) to late (stage 4).
- **Surgical resection:** indicates whether or not the tumor can be surgically removed.

The doctors may use one or both methods to describe the stage.

Lectures and Seminars

It can be difficult to keep up with all of the new discoveries and information available about pancreatic cancer. Leading medical professionals present a wide range of topics with patients, caregivers and loved ones in mind. For more information, visit: www.pancan.org.