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Pancreatic Cancer

The pancreas is a gland behind your stomach and in front of your spine. It produces the juices that help break down food and the hormones that help control blood sugar [<https://medlineplus.gov/bloodglucose.html>] levels. Pancreatic cancer usually begins in the cells that produce the juices. Some risk factors for developing pancreatic cancer include:

- Smoking
- Long-term diabetes
- Chronic pancreatitis
- Certain hereditary disorders

Pancreatic cancer is hard to catch early. It doesn't cause symptoms right away. When you do get symptoms, they are often vague or you may not notice them. They include yellowing of the skin and eyes, pain in the abdomen and back, weight loss and fatigue. Also, because the pancreas is hidden behind other organs, health care providers cannot see or feel the tumors during routine exams. Doctors use a physical exam, blood tests, imaging tests, and a biopsy to diagnose it.

Because it is often found late and it spreads quickly, pancreatic cancer can be hard to treat. Possible treatments include surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and targeted therapy. Targeted therapy uses drugs or other substances that attack specific cancer cells with less harm to normal cells.

NIH: National Cancer Institute

Start Here

- General Information about Pancreatic Cancer [https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/patient/pancreatic-treatment-pdq#_110]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/pancreas/paciente/tratamiento-pancreas-pdq#_1]
- What Is Pancreatic Cancer? [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/about/what-is-pancreatic-cancer.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-pancreas/acerca/que-es-el-cancer-de-pancreas.html>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Abdominal exploration - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100049_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100049_1.htm]
- Amylase Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/amylase-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-amilasa/>]
- CA 19-9 Blood Test (Pancreatic Cancer) [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/ca-19-9-blood-test-pancreatic-cancer/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-ca-19-9-en-sangre-cancer-de-pancreas/>]
- Can Pancreatic Cancer Be Found Early? [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/detection.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-pancreas/deteccion-diagnostico-clasificacion-por-etapas/deteccion.html>]

• Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/endoscopic-retrograde-cholangiopancreatography>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/colangiopancreatografia-retrograda-endoscopica>]

- Glucagon Blood Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/glucagon-blood-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/analisis-de-sangre-de-glucagon/>]
- Stage and Grade of Pancreatic Cancer [<https://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/stage-grade>]
(Johns Hopkins University, Department of Pathology)
- Stages of Pancreatic Cancer [https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/patient/pancreatic-treatment-pdq#_139]
 (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/pancreas/paciente/tratamiento-pancreas-pdq#section/_37]
- Stages of Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumors [https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/patient/pnet-treatment-pdq#_24]
 (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/pancreas/paciente/tratamiento-tne-pdq#section/_22]
- Tests for Pancreatic Cancer [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/how-diagnosed.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-pancreas/deteccion-diagnostico-clasificacion-por-etapas/como-se-diagnostica.html>]
- Tumor Marker Tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/tumor-marker-tests/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/marcadores-tumorales/>]

Prevention and Risk Factors

- Pancreatic Cancer Risk Factors [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-pancreas/causas-riesgos-prevencion/factores-de-riesgo.html>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Acupuncture for Pancreatic Cancer Patients [<https://pancan.org/news/acupuncture-for-pancreatic-cancer-patients/>]
(Pancreatic Cancer Action Network)
- Drugs Approved for Pancreatic Cancer [<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/drugs/pancreatic>]
 (National Cancer Institute)
- Pain Management [<https://pancreasfoundation.org/patient-resources/pain-management/>] (National Pancreas Foundation)
- Surgery for Pancreatic Cancer [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/treating/surgery.html>]
(American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-pancreas/tratamiento/cirugia.html>]
- Surgical Treatment [<https://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/treatment/surgical-treatment>]
(Johns Hopkins University, Department of Pathology)
- Treatment Option Overview (Pancreatic Cancer) [https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/patient/pancreatic-treatment-pdq#_162]
 (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/pancreas/paciente/tratamiento-pancreas-pdq#section/_52]
- Treatment Option Overview for Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumors (Islet Cell Tumors)
[https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/patient/pnet-treatment-pdq#_42]
 (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/pancreas/paciente/tratamiento-tne-pdq#section/_46]

Living With

- 7 Physical Challenges Supportive Care Can Help [<https://pancan.org/news/7-physical-challenges-supportive-care-can-help/>]
(Pancreatic Cancer Action Network)
- Living as a Pancreatic Cancer Survivor [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/after-treatment/follow-up.html>]
(American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-pancreas/despues-del-tratamiento/cuidado-de-seguimiento.html>]

- Nutrition Following Pancreatic Surgery [<https://pancan.org/facing-pancreatic-cancer/living-with-pancreatic-cancer/diet-and-nutrition/after-a-whipple-procedure/>] (Pancreatic Cancer Action Network)
- Pain Management [<https://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/treatment/pain-management>] (Johns Hopkins University, Department of Pathology)
- Pancreatic Enzymes [<https://pancan.org/facing-pancreatic-cancer/living-with-pancreatic-cancer/diet-and-nutrition/pancreatic-enzymes/>] (Pancreatic Cancer Action Network)
- Quality of Life [<https://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/quality-life>] (Johns Hopkins University, Department of Pathology)

Related Issues

- Questions to Ask About Pancreatic Cancer [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/talking-with-doctor.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-panreas/deteccion-diagnostico-clasificacion-por-etapas/la-comunicacion-con-su-medico.html>]
- What Questions Should I Ask My Doctor? [<https://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/questions-to-ask>] (Johns Hopkins University, Department of Pathology)

Specifics

- General Information about Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumors (Islet Cell Tumors) [https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/patient/pnet-treatment-pdq#_1]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/pancreas/paciente/tratamiento-tne-pdq#_1]
- Zollinger-Ellison Syndrome [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/zollinger-ellison-syndrome>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Genetics

- About Familial Pancreatic Cancer: Pancreatic Cancer Can Be Hereditary [<https://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/familial/about>] (Johns Hopkins University, Department of Pathology)

Statistics and Research

- Advances in Pancreatic Cancer Research [<https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/research>]  (National Cancer Institute)
- Cancer Statistics: Pancreatic Cancer [<https://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/pancreas.html>]  (National Cancer Institute)
- Key Statistics about Pancreatic Cancer [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-panreas/acerca/estadisticas-clave.html>]
- Testing an mRNA Vaccine to Treat Pancreatic Cancer [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2023/08/testing-mrna-vaccine-treat-pancreatic-cancer>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/prueba-de-una-vacuna-de-arnm-para-tratar-el-cancer-de>]
- What's New in Pancreatic Cancer Research and Treatment? [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/about/new-research.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/tipos/cancer-de-panreas/acerca/nuevas-investigaciones.html>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Carcinoma, Islet Cell [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Carcinoma,+Islet+Cell%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pancreatic Neoplasms [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pancreatic+Neoplasms%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: An immune responsive tumor microenvironment imprints into PBMCs and predicts outcome... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40696453]
- Article: Phase 1 trial of HR070803 (an Irinotecan liposome) in combination with... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40619376]
- Article: Phase II basket trial of Dual Anti-CTLA-4 and anti-PD-1 blockade in... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40588371]
- Pancreatic Cancer -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pancreatic+Neoplasms%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND%22last+1+Year%22%5Bdat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

Reference Desk

- Dictionary of Cancer Terms [https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/publicaciones/diccionarios/diccionario-cancer/]
- Pancreas Basics [https://pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/basics] (Johns Hopkins University, Department of Pathology)

Find an Expert

- American Cancer Society [https://www.cancer.org/]
- ASGE: Find a Doctor [https://www.asge.org/find-a-doctor-results] (American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy)
- Choosing a Cancer Doctor [https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/finding-care/where-to-find-cancer-care/choosing-a-cancer-doctor.html] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/como-sobrelevar-el-cancer/encontrar-tratamiento/como-elegir-un-medico-y-un-hospital/como-seleccionar-a-un-medico.html]
- National Cancer Institute [https://www.cancer.gov/] 
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol]
- NCI - Designated Cancer Centers [https://www.cancer.gov/research/infrastructure/cancer-centers]
 (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/investigacion/infraestructura/centros-oncologicos]
- Organizations that Offer Cancer Support Services [https://supportorgs.cancer.gov/home.aspx] 
(National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://supportorgs.cancer.gov/home.aspx?lang=2]

Children

- Childhood Pancreatic Cancer Treatment [https://www.cancer.gov/types/pancreatic/patient/child-pancreatic-treatment-pdq]

(National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/pancreas/paciente/tratamiento-pancreas-infantil-pdq]

Patient Handouts

- After chemotherapy - discharge [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000012.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000012.htm]
- Amylase - urine [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003607.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003607.htm]
- Pancreatic cancer [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000236.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000236.htm]
- Zollinger-Ellison syndrome [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000325.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000325.htm]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Abdominal CT scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003789.htm>]

Abdominal exploration [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002928.htm>]

Abdominal exploration - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100049_1.htm]

Abdominal MRI scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003796.htm>]

After chemotherapy - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000012.htm>]

Amylase - urine [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003607.htm>]

Biopsy - biliary tract [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003894.htm>]

Fecal fat [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003588.htm>]

Gastrin blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003697.htm>]

Glucagonoma [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000326.htm>]

Insulinoma [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000387.htm>]

Lipase test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003465.htm>]

Pancreatic cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000236.htm>]

Pancreatic islet cell tumor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000393.htm>]

Secretin stimulation test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003892.htm>]

Surgery for pancreatic cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007649.htm>]

Surgery for pancreatic cancer -- discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000820.htm>]

Trypsinogen test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003560.htm>]

Vasoactive intestinal peptide test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003508.htm>]

VIPoma [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000228.htm>]

Zollinger-Ellison syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000325.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Pancreatic Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/pancreaticdiseases.html>]

The primary NIH organization for research on *Pancreatic Cancer* is the National Cancer Institute [<http://www.cancer.gov/>]

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