

Pancreatic Cancer Facts

THE PANCREAS IS:

- A gland located deep in the abdomen, between the stomach and the spine.
- Responsible for the production of enzymes for digestion (exocrine function) and production of hormones that regulate blood sugar level (endocrine function).

PANCREATIC CANCER:

- Occurs when cells become abnormal and grow out of control.
- May spread (metastasize) to other sites in the body.
- Can be categorized in two main types:
 - 1) Adenocarcinoma
 - 2) Neuroendocrine (Islet cell) carcinoma
- Will be diagnosed in 33,730 people in the United States this year.
- Is the 4th leading cause of cancer death in the United States.

SYMPTOMS OF PANCREATIC CANCER:

- Pain in abdomen or back
- Jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes)
- Dark urine
- Itching
- Fatigue or weakness
- Digestive problems
- Nausea and vomiting
- Significant weight loss

RISK FACTORS:

- Smoking: 2-3 times increased risk for smokers vs. non-smokers.
- Chronic pancreatitis (hereditary)
- Family history: 2-3 times increased risk if first-degree relative diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.
- Diabetes

FAMILIAL PANCREATIC CANCER:

- About 10% of pancreatic cancer cases are familial (hereditary).

PANCREATIC CANCER CAN BE DIAGNOSED BY:

- Physical Exam
- Computed Tomography (CT) scan
- Endoscopic Ultrasound (EUS)
- Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)
- Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan

TREATMENTS:

- **CHEMOTHERAPY:** Only 2 chemotherapy drugs are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of pancreatic cancer: gemcitabine (Gemzar®) and erlotinib (Tarceva®).
- **SURGERY:** Some people with pancreatic cancer can undergo surgery to remove the tumor. The Whipple procedure is the surgical procedure most commonly used to treat people with pancreatic cancer.
- **RADIATION THERAPY:** Some people with pancreatic cancer may receive radiation therapy, in addition to chemotherapy.
- **CLINICAL TRIALS:** Many clinical trials are available for people with pancreatic cancer. Clinical trials offer access to new, potentially better treatments, early detection, and prevention. People participating in a clinical trial will never receive placebo (sugar pill) only.

PanCAN's PATIENT AND LIAISON SERVICES (PALS)

If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, call the PALS program. Trained PALS Associates provide one-on-one guidance and information on disease and treatment, individualized clinical trials searches, and support resources. All services and informational materials are provided at no charge.

Call 877.272.6226 or email [_____](#)
