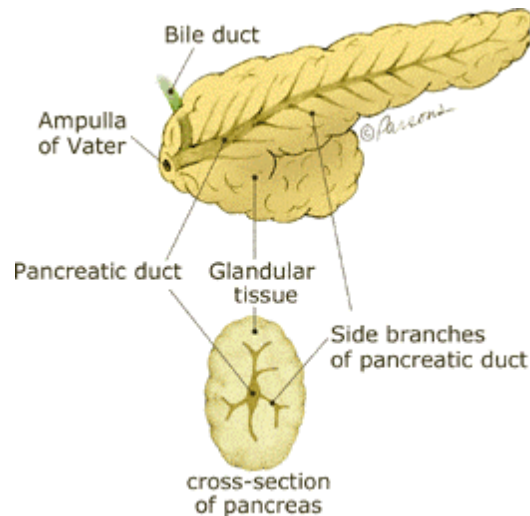


November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

What is Pancreatic Cancer?

Pancreatic cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the pancreas. The pancreas is a gland located deep in the abdomen between the stomach and the spine (backbone). The liver, intestine, blood vessels, and other organs surround the pancreas. The pancreas is about 6 inches long and is shaped like a flat pear. The widest part of the pancreas is the head, the middle section is the body, and the thinnest part is the tail.



About 90% of pancreatic cancers are found in the pancreatic ducts. These ducts make special enzymes that help with food digestion. About two thirds of pancreatic cancers are in the head of the pancreas. This is the part closest to the beginning of the small bowel. This type of pancreatic cancer can be fast growing and may spread to the liver, nearby lymph nodes, and nerves surrounding the pancreas. There are other, rarer types of pancreatic cancers that rarely spread to other parts of the pancreas. Pancreatic cancers that occur in these areas have different names depending on the type of cell that becomes cancerous.

What Are the Key Statistics About Pancreatic Cancer?

Pancreatic cancer is now the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States for both men and women. In 2024, about 66,440 new cases will be diagnosed in the US and 51,750 people will die from the disease. For all stages combined, the 5-year relative survival rate is 13%. The 5-year survival rate for localized disease is 44%.

What are the Risk Factors of Pancreatic Cancer?

- Tobacco use
- Being overweight
- Type 2 diabetes
- Heavy alcohol use
- Family history of pancreatic cancer
- Personal history of chronic pancreatitis
- Increasing age with two-thirds of cases diagnosed at age 65 or older
- People with certain genetic syndromes such as Lych syndrome
- Inherited gene mutations such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations

What Are Signs and Symptoms of Pancreatic Cancer?

Early pancreatic cancer usually do not cause any signs or symptoms. When the disease is advanced, the following can occur:

- Weight loss
- Abdominal discomfort that may radiate to the back
- Jaundice which is yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes
- Severe abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Gallbladder or liver enlargement
- Blood clots
- Diabetes

Can Pancreatic Cancer be Found Early?

There are no current screening or early detection tests for pancreatic cancer. People at high risk can benefit from annual surveillance with endoscopic ultrasound and/or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

Can Pancreatic Cancer be Prevented?

The following may lower your risk:

- Don't smoke
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Get regular physical activity
- Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains
- Limit or avoid red and processed meats, sugary drinks and highly processed foods
- Avoid alcohol
- Limit exposure to certain chemicals in the workplace

Cancer Prevention Trials at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

If you would like information about clinical trials for preventing cancer, please call Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey's Office of Human Research Services at 732-235-7356. For additional information about nationwide cancer prevention trials, you can call the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4 CANCER or visit their website at www.cancer.gov.

Where Can I Find Further Information?

Resource and Learning Center

732-235-9639

www.cinj.org/rlc

Provides reliable, relevant and current information about all aspects of cancer.

Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

1-877-272-6226

www.pancan.org

The Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research

1-866-789-1000

www.lustgartenfoundation.org

National Cancer Institute

1-800-422-6237

www.cancer.gov

The American Cancer Society

1-800-227-2345

www.cancer.org



RLC pancreatic cancer website QR code. Scan with smartphone / device.