What You Should Know About Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic cancer is an aggressive form of cancer that develops in the tissue of the pancreas. Located in the abdomen below the lower part of the stomach, the pancreas aids in digestion. It contains both exocrine glands (which produce enzymes that help break down food) and endocrine glands (which produce hormones, including insulin, that help control blood sugar levels in the body).

**Did you know?**

Pancancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States.

The average estimated lifetime risk of developing pancreatic cancer is 1 in 65 (1.5%).

### RISK FACTORS

- **Tobacco use**
- **Age**
- **Genetic**
- **Physical inactivity**
- **Diabetes**

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

**Surgery**

- Pancreaticoduodenectomy: Removes the tumor, part of the pancreas, the gallbladder, and nearby lymph nodes.
- Whipple procedure: Removes the tumor, part of the pancreas, the stomach, and nearby lymph nodes.
- Palliative surgery: Relieves symptoms such as pain or obstructed bile flow.

**Radiation Therapy**

- Radiation therapy delivers a high dose of radiation to the pancreas tumor. This treatment may be used alone or with chemotherapy.

**Chemotherapy**

- Chemotherapy targets cancer cells with drugs that destroy them.

**Gastroenterology**

- Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) involves inserting a thin tube into the body to view the inside of the duct of the pancreas.

**Interventional Radiology**

- Palliative procedures for relieving symptoms.

### TYPES OF PANCREATIC CANCER

There are two types of pancreatic cancer: one affecting the exocrine gland and the other affecting the endocrine gland.

- **Exocrine tumors**
  - Adenocarcinoma: The most common type of pancreatic cancer. Diagnostic tests for cancer include an imaging test, endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), and biopsy.

### SYMPTOMS

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes)
- Digestive problems, including abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting
- Pain in the upper abdomen that is felt back
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Sudsy weight loss
- Swollen gallbladder
- Blood clots

To learn more, go to www.cancer.org/pancreaticcancer/