

KNOWING MORE ON

PANCREATIC CANCER

RAISING AWARENESS

DESCRIPTION

- Pancreatic cancer starts when **abnormal cells in the pancreas begin to grow uncontrollably** in its tissues and form a tumor.
- When the tumor grows, **cancer cells can spread** through tissues, lymph vessels or the blood to other areas in the body like nearby lymph nodes, blood vessels, the liver or lungs.
- The most common type of pancreatic cancer starts in the glands that help digest/break down food, known as **exocrine pancreatic cancer**.
- Pancreatic cancer is a **particularly aggressive cancer and may not show symptoms until it is advanced**.

SYMPTOMS

PANCREATIC CANCER MAY SHOW VAGUE SYMPTOMS SIMILAR TO OTHER CONDITIONS:

- Abdomen or back pain
- Jaundice: yellowing of the skin or eyes
- New onset of diabetes not associated with weight gain
- Weight loss and loss of appetite
- Indigestion not responding to medication
- Blood clots
- Nausea, diarrhea or vomiting
- Fatigue
- Dark yellow colored urine
- Change in stool

RISK FACTORS

SEVERAL FACTORS CAN INCREASE THE RISK FOR PANCREATIC CANCER:

- **Smoking:** Smoking doubles the risk compared to non-smoking. All types of tobacco smoking (cigarettes, nargileh pipe or cigar) raise this risk.
- **Second-hand smoke:** The more exposed you are, the higher the risk.
- **Family history** of pancreatic cancer or pancreatitis in first degree relatives, especially if cancer is diagnosed under age 50.
- **Increasing age:** More common after age 65

RISK FACTORS

- **Chronic inflammation of the pancreas - pancreatitis-:** Higher for hereditary pancreatitis.
- **Genetic susceptibility:** Family history of genetic syndromes (such as hereditary breast & ovarian cancer, Lynch syndrome, Familial malignant mole malignant melanoma)
- **Obesity:** 20% more risk
- **Diabetes:** Long standing over 5 years
- **Cirrhosis of the liver**
- **Diet:** High in fat and red and processed meat

Smoking+Diabetes+Poor Diet raises the risk more than any other factor alone

TREATMENT

DEPENDS ON THE SIZE, LOCATION, TYPE & STAGE OF THE TUMOR:

- **Surgery:** Used to remove the tumor or relieve symptoms.
- **Chemotherapy:** Medications to destroy rapidly growing cells like cancer. Given before or after surgery.
- **Radiotherapy:** High energy rays to destroy cancer cells and stop their growth. Given before or after surgery.

PREVENTION

- **Do not smoke or quit smoking:** Quitting lowers your risk of pancreatic cancer by half and helps you live longer.
- **Avoid exposure to second-hand smoke:** Ask your family members who smoke to stop or to do so outside. Avoid smoky locations (including nargileh).
- **Consult a doctor if you have family history** of pancreatic cancer, associated genetic syndromes or pancreatic cysts: Some screenings may help to detect a problem early.
- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Increase your physical activity + limit your caloric intake to loose weight
- **Choose a healthy diet:** Rich in fruits + vegetables + whole grains