

## Pancreatic Carcinoma: Types, Causes and Treatment

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### DESCRIPTION

Pancreatic cancer develops when abnormal cells in the pancreas grow and divide uncontrollably, resulting in the formation of a tumour. Cells make up organs such as the pancreas. Cells normally divide to form new cells as the body requires them. Cells die as they age, and new cells replace them. This process occasionally fails. The extra cells can combine to form a mass of tissue known as a tumour. Some tumours are harmless. This means that they are abnormal, but they cannot spread to other parts of the body. Cancer refers to a malignant tumour. The cells proliferate uncontrollably and have the potential to spread to other tissues and organs. Even if the cancer spreads to other parts of the body, it is still referred to as pancreatic cancer if it began in the pancreas. Pancreatic cancer frequently spreads to the liver, the abdominal wall, the lungs, the bones, and or the lymph nodes.

### Types of pancreatic cancer

Pancreatic tumours are classified as either exocrine or neuroendocrine (endocrine). This is determined by the type of cell they begin in. It is critical to understand the type of tumour because each one behaves differently and responds to different treatments. Exocrine tumours account for more than 90% of pancreatic cancers. Neuroendocrine tumours (pancreatic NETs or PNETs), also known as islet cell tumours, account for less than 10% of pancreatic tumours. They frequently grow more slowly than exocrine tumours.

### Causes pancreatic cancer

Cancer is caused by changes in your DNA. These can be passed down from your parents or develop over time. Changes that occur over time may occur as a result of being exposed to something harmful. About 10% of pancreatic cancers are hereditary or familial. Most pancreatic cancers occur at random or are caused by factors such as smoking, obesity, and age. If you have a first-degree relative who has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, you may be at a higher risk of developing the disease. It is strongly advised that the family member with

pancreatic cancer undergo genetic testing for inherited mutations. Negative results frequently indicate that genetic testing is unnecessary.

Diabetes can cause pancreatic cancer or be a symptom of pancreatic cancer, so a person may be more likely to develop it.

- Long-standing diabetes
- Chronic and hereditary pancreatitis
- Smoking
- Age: over 60
- Gender: males slightly more likely
- Obesity: A diet high in red and processed meats this does not imply that everyone with these risk factors will develop pancreatic cancer, or that everyone with pancreatic cancer has one or more of them.

### Signs and symptoms of pancreatic cancer

- Abdominal or back pain
- Weight loss
- Jaundice
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Changes in stool
- Pancreatitis (pancreatic swelling)
- Recent-onset diabetes

Symptoms include fatigue, weakness, and depression. A person with advanced pancreatic cancer may also experience abdominal fluid and blood clots.

### Treatment

Pancreatic cancer treatment is determined by the stage of the disease as well as the patient's overall health. Patients can receive standard (approved) treatments or participate in clinical trials. Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation are the most common treatments. Clinical trials investigate new treatments. Clinical trials are strongly recommended by the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network at the time of diagnosis and throughout all treatment decisions.

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