

Pancreatic cancer affects around 60,000 Americans per year. Pioneer GI Clinic understands that a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer is scary, so they're here to offer hope and solutions. There are several effective options for relieving your symptoms and improving your quality of life.

## **What is pancreatic cancer?**

Pancreatic cancer is a rare form of cancer, accounting for around 3% of all cancers today.

This type of cancer occurs when cells within your pancreas — the organ that aids in food digestion and blood sugar regulation — start to multiply out of control. This forms a tumor, which then grows larger over time.

## **What symptoms does pancreatic cancer cause?**

Pancreatic cancer is often called a silent disease because it doesn't usually cause obvious symptoms early on. As the tumor grows, however, you could experience:

- Jaundice: Yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Abdominal pain, which may move to your back
- Nausea
- Poor appetite
- Unexpected weight loss
- Dark urine
- Light stools
- Skin itching
- Tiredness

Many of the symptoms of pancreatic cancer also occur with pancreatitis, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), diverticulitis, peptic ulcers, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), and other gastrointestinal conditions. If you're having these symptoms, an accurate diagnosis is the first step toward feeling better.

## **What causes pancreatic cancer?**

The cause of pancreatic cancer isn't certain, but risk factors like smoking, alcohol consumption, a fatty diet, and preexisting pancreatitis may increase your chance of developing the cancer. You can also inherit an increased risk of pancreatic cancer.

## **How is pancreatic cancer diagnosed?**

Diagnosis requires a full medical history and physical exam. Some of the different tests to diagnose pancreatic cancer include computed tomography (CT) scans, magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography (MRCP), and endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP).

Many tests include a biopsy, which involves taking a small tissue sample to check it for cancerous cells.

## **How is pancreatic cancer treated?**

Pancreatic cancer is most treatable when it's discovered in its early stages. Treatment options include surgery to remove a portion or all of the pancreas, radiation, and chemotherapy. In many cases, a combination of these treatments is the best approach.

Many clinical trials are currently investigating and testing promising new drugs for pancreatic cancer as well.

Pioneer GI Clinic understands that pain can be especially severe for people living with pancreatic cancer. They recommend customized pain management solutions, such as oral medication and nerve blocks.

If you're living with pancreatic cancer, you need respectful and empathetic care from your medical providers. Pioneer GI Clinic combines compassionate care with the most advanced treatments to help you enjoy a high quality of life again.