

**Pancreatic  
Cancer  
UK**

# **Pancreatic Cancer**

**What is it?  
How is it diagnosed?**



**An EasyRead Booklet**

## Contents:

This EasyRead booklet is about pancreatic cancer and how it is diagnosed.

There are 4 booklets in total.

- [Pancreatic Cancer](#) - What is it? How is it diagnosed?
- [Pancreatic Cancer](#) - Treatment if you can't have surgery
- [Pancreatic Cancer](#) - Surgery to remove pancreatic cancer
- [Pancreatic Cancer](#) - Treating symptoms and getting support

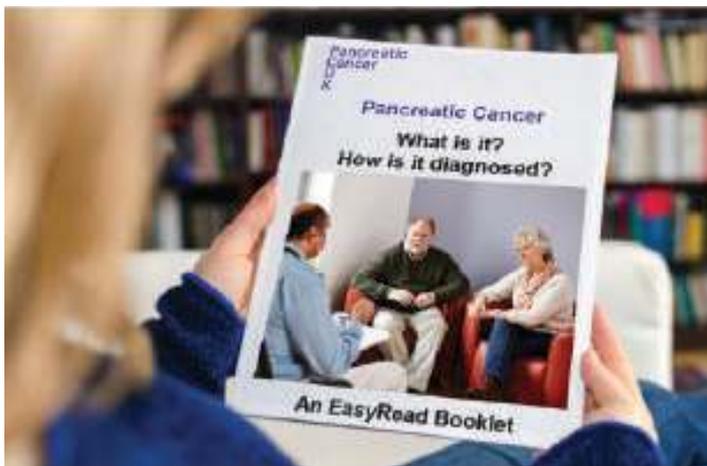
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## About this booklet



This EasyRead booklet can help if you have just been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

It might also be helpful for your family and friends.



There is a lot to take in when you have just been diagnosed.

This booklet will give you the information you need.



If you have any questions about anything you read in this booklet speak to your doctor or nurse.

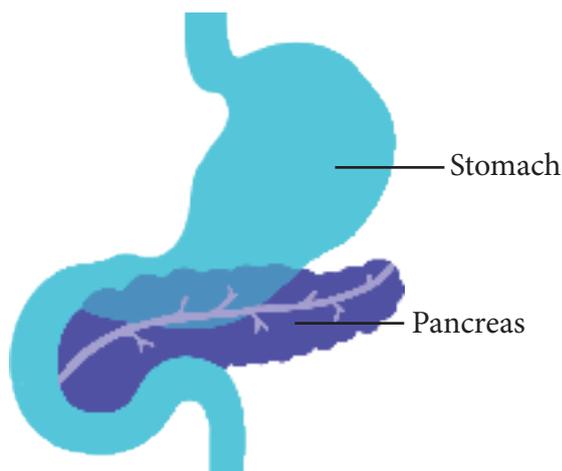


You can also speak to one of our specialist nurses on our Support Line. They can answer your questions and talk about your worries.

The number is **0808 801 0707**. It is free to call.

You can also email the nurses at: [\*\*nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk\*\*](mailto:nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk)

## What is the pancreas?



The pancreas is an organ. It sits behind your stomach.

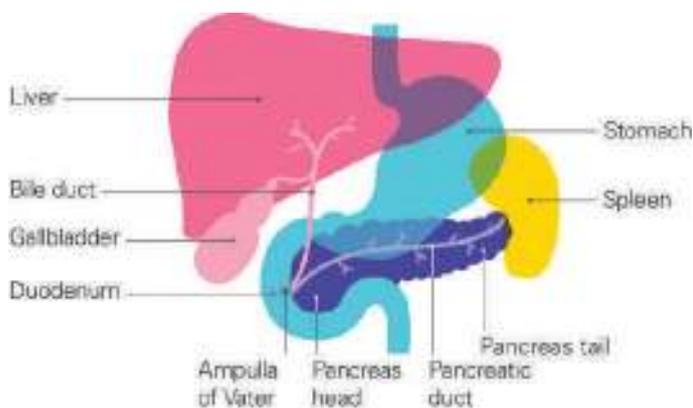


The pancreas does two main things:

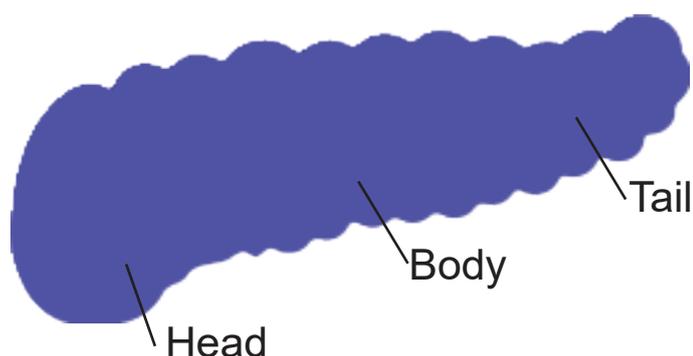
- it helps to break down food so your body can use it
- it makes insulin, which controls the sugar levels in your blood.

Some important and large organs sit around your pancreas, like your liver, stomach and spleen.

There are also some important blood vessels near the pancreas.



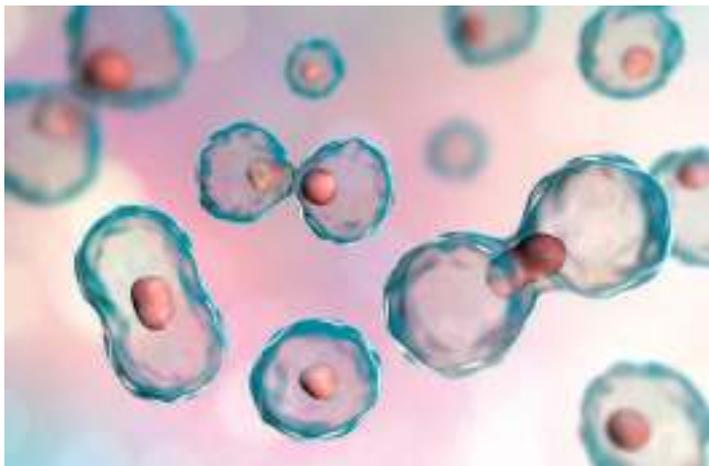
### Pancreas



There are three parts to your pancreas. They are called the head, body and tail.

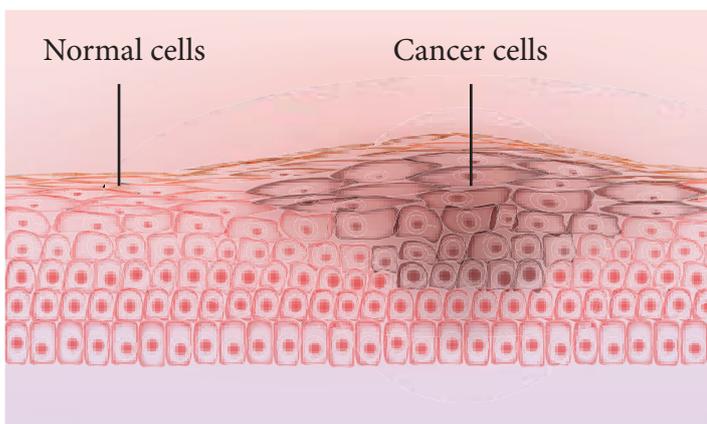
The cancer can grow anywhere.

## What is pancreatic cancer?



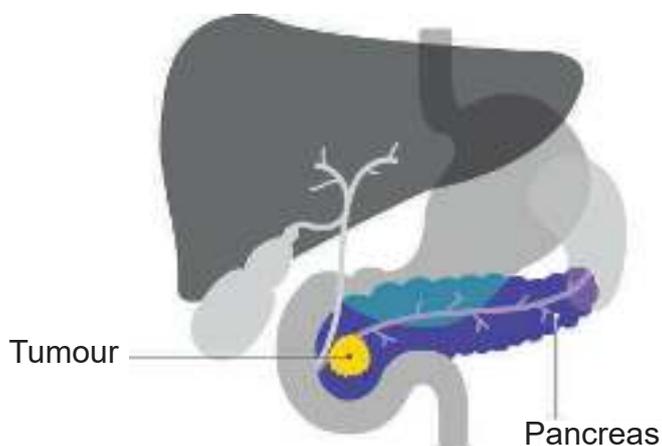
Our bodies are made up of tiny cells.

These cells split and make more new cells. This is how our bodies grow and repair.



Normal healthy cells grow in a safe way.

Pancreatic cancer develops when the cells in your pancreas grow out of control and form a lump. This lump is called a tumour.



The most common type of cancer is called pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma.



You can find out more about the different types of pancreatic cancer on our website at:

[www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/types](http://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/types)

## Symptoms of pancreatic cancer



Some of the symptoms that you might get are:

- not feeling hungry
- indigestion, which is a painful, burning feeling in your chest
- losing weight even though you are eating
- feeling or being sick
- bowel problems like constipation (not being able to go for a poo) and diarrhoea (runny poo)
- tummy and back pain
- jaundice (yellow skin or eyes and itchy skin).



## What causes pancreatic cancer?

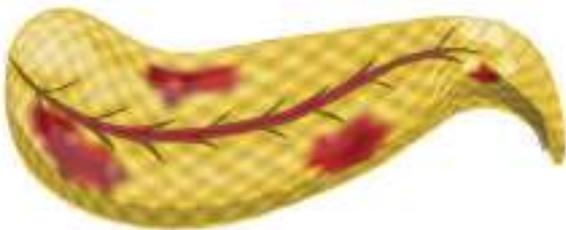


We don't know what causes pancreatic cancer, but we do know of some things that might increase your risk of getting it. They are:

- smoking



- being overweight



pancreatitis

- having pancreatitis which is an inflammation of your pancreas



- a family history of pancreatic cancer.

This means 2 or more people in your family have had pancreatic cancer.

## Diagnosing pancreatic cancer



Pancreatic cancer can be difficult to diagnose. This is because there aren't many symptoms at the beginning.

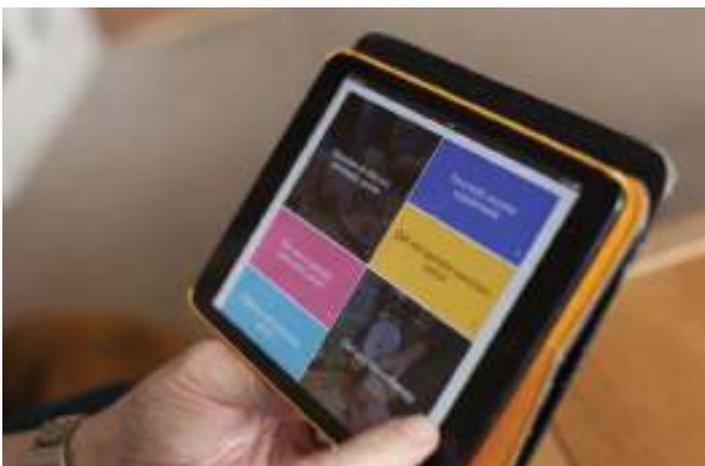
Many people are not diagnosed until the cancer may have started to spread.



You may already have had a lot of tests but you may still need to have more.



For example, tests to find out what type of pancreatic cancer you have, how big it is and if it has spread.



There is more information about the tests on our website at:

**[www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/tests](http://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/tests)**

## Waiting for tests



You may have to wait a few days or up to 2 weeks for some scans or tests.



If you haven't heard anything after 2 weeks then speak to your doctor or nurse.



You might start to feel unwell, quite quickly.



If this happens while you are waiting for tests, speak to your doctor or nurse at the hospital.

## Test results



It may take up to 2 weeks for you to get your test results.

They will be sent to your doctor.



The doctor will tell you more about your cancer.

They may tell you about the size and if it has spread. This is called the stage.



The doctor will let you know if it is possible to remove the cancer with surgery.

If surgery is not possible, the doctor will talk about other treatments with you.



If you have any worries you can talk to one of our specialist nurses on our Support Line.

The number is **0808 801 0707**.  
It is free to call.

## Support from us



You can find out more about diagnosing pancreatic cancer on our website at:

[www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/diagnosis](http://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/diagnosis)



It may come as a shock to be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

It is natural to have lots of different emotions, questions and concerns.

Your family may also be worried and have questions.



There is lots of support available to help you and your family cope. You can find out more information in our booklet **Pancreatic Cancer - Treating symptoms and getting support.**



You can also speak to our specialist nurses on our Support Line.

The number is **0808 801 0707**. It is free to call.

# Pancreatic Cancer UK

This information has been produced by the Support and Information Team at Pancreatic Cancer UK and BTM, who specialise in accessible information.

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