

Pancreatic Cancer

Treatment if you can't have surgery



An EasyRead Booklet

Contents:

This EasyRead booklet is about pancreatic cancer if you can't have surgery.

There are 4 booklets in total.

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- [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 and you can't have surgery.

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

Specialist Centres



There are specialist pancreatic cancer centres all over the country.

They are based in hospitals.



Doctors and nurses work together as part of a team.

They are all experts in cancer.



You might not have to go to a specialist centre, but the team will always be involved in decisions about your treatment.



Your tests and treatment will usually be done at hospitals close to where you live.

Who will I be treated by?



The team who is responsible for your treatment and care is called the multidisciplinary team or MDT.

It is based in the hospital and is made up of doctors and nurses.



You might not meet everyone in the team but they will all look at your test results and decide the best treatment for you.



You will be given a main person to contact, who is usually a specialist nurse.

They will give you expert care and advice.



They will support you and be the person you talk to most. They will be part of your MDT.

Other people that you might see



Gastroenterologist – a doctor who treats diseases of the digestive system, like the pancreas.



Oncologist – a doctor who treats cancer.



Surgeon – a doctor who does operations.



Dietitian – a professional who gives advice about diet and which foods are best to eat.

They also help with any problems you have when you eat.

Talking to your doctor and nurse



Your doctor or nurse should ask you about how you are feeling and if you feel sad or worried.



They should also ask about symptoms or side effects that you may have.

For more information on symptoms and side effects look at our booklet: **Pancreatic Cancer - Treating symptoms and getting support.**

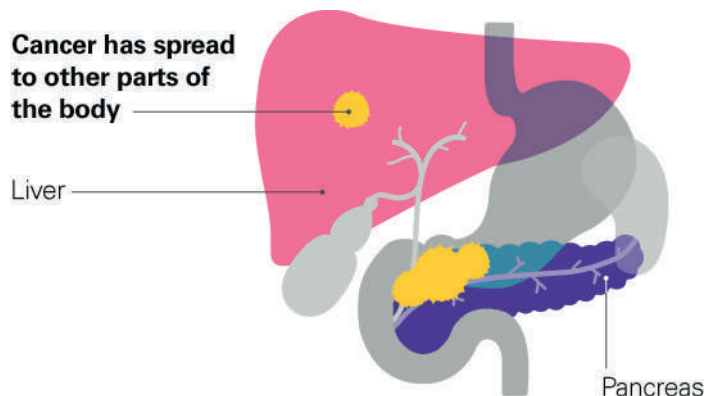


They should make sure you have all the care and support you need.



If your doctor or nurse doesn't ask about these things, it's important to tell them about anything that's worrying you.

Treatments



If the cancer has spread to other organs or blood vessels then it may not be possible to remove the cancer.



You may be given treatment which will slow down the growth of the cancer.

You will also be given treatment to help with any symptoms and improve how you feel.



You will have an appointment with the doctor to talk about what treatments you can have.

They will tell you what it will involve and about any side effects.

There is more information about treatments on the next pages.



It's a good idea to take someone with you, like a family member or friend.

They can help you to remember what is said and take notes for you.



You don't have to make a decision about treatment right away. You will be given time to think about what the doctor has said.

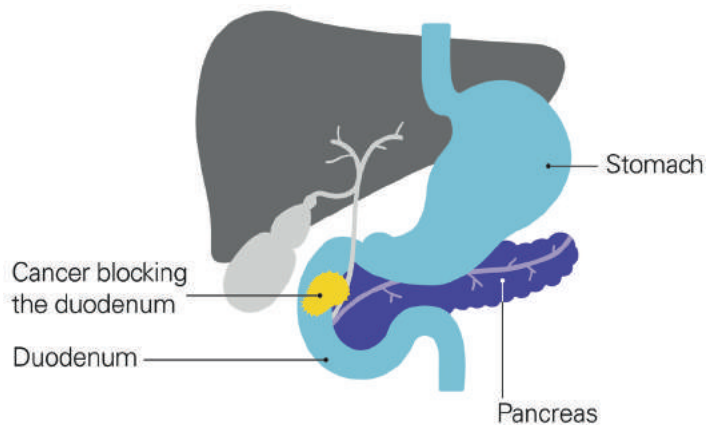


You might want to talk to other people about it, like your family or your GP.



Don't be afraid to ask the doctor or nurse any questions you have about your treatment.

Treatments for a blocked duodenum

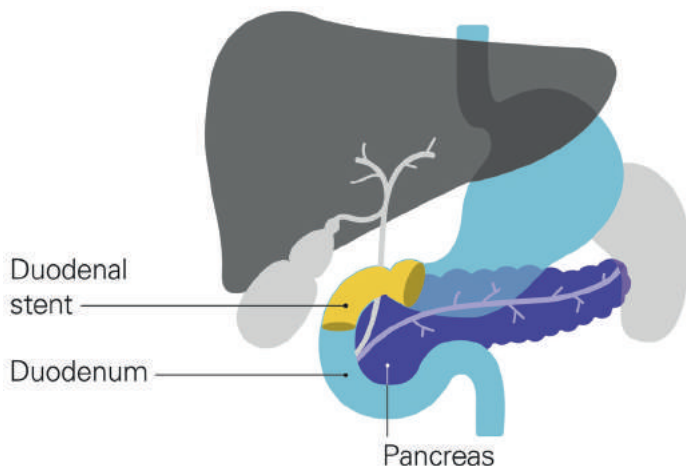


The **duodenum** is the first part of the small intestine.

If your duodenum is blocked, food won't be able to get through to your intestines.



The food will build up in your stomach and make you feel uncomfortable. It will also make you feel sick and be sick.



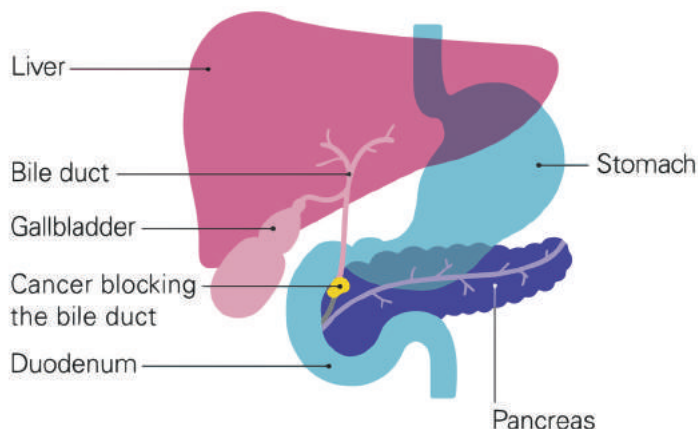
If this happens, a small tube called a stent can be put into the duodenum.

The stent will open up the duodenum so that food can get through.



Another option may be to have an operation to bypass the blockage in the duodenum.

Treatments for a blocked bile duct



The cancer might also block your bile duct.

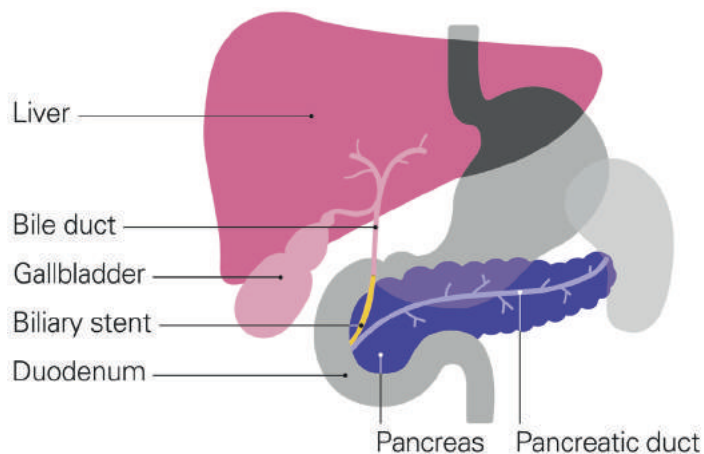
The **bile duct** is a tube that carries bile from the liver.

Bile is a fluid that helps to break down food.



If your bile duct is blocked, you may get jaundice.

Symptoms of jaundice are yellow skin and eyes and itching.



If this happens, a small tube called a stent can be put into the bile duct.

The stent will unblock the bile duct and will help the jaundice.



Another option may be to have an operation to bypass the blockage in your bile duct.

Chemotherapy



Chemotherapy is when you are given medicine to kill the cancer or slow down the growth of the cancer.

Chemotherapy won't cure your cancer but it might help you to live longer and feel better.



Chemotherapy is usually done in the Oncology clinic at the hospital.

It is given through a tube which is put into your hand, arm or chest. Sometimes you might be given chemotherapy tablets.



Chemotherapy can cause side effects. They include feeling and being sick, and feeling very tired.

You are also more likely to get an infection that makes you ill.



Your doctor or nurse can help with the side effects.

For example, they might give you medicine to stop you feeling sick.

Radiotherapy



Radiotherapy isn't used as much as other treatments.

You might have radiotherapy on its own but it is mostly used together with chemotherapy. This is called chemoradiotherapy.



Radiotherapy or chemoradiotherapy won't cure the cancer but it might slow down the growth of the cancer.

If your cancer has spread to other parts of the body you might have radiotherapy to help with pain.



Radiotherapy can cause side effects but they are usually mild.

They can include feeling very tired, feeling and being sick and having runny poo (diarrhoea).



Your doctor or nurse can help with the side effects.

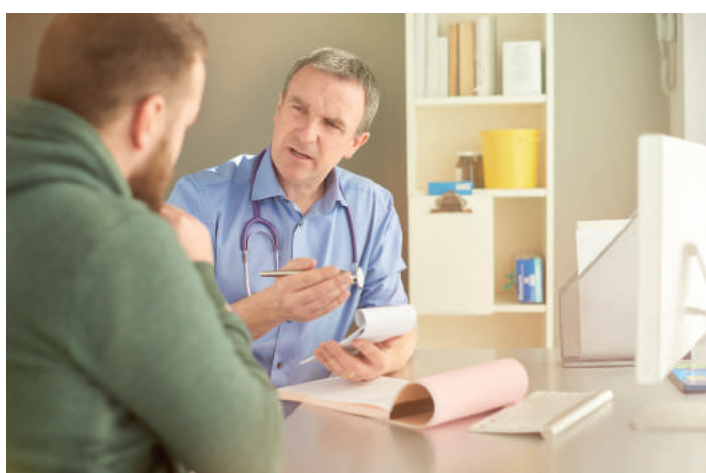
For example, they might give you medicine to stop you feeling sick.

Clinical trials



Clinical trials are medical research studies that involve patients. They try to find better treatments for pancreatic cancer.

Your doctor or nurse might ask if you want to take part in a trial.



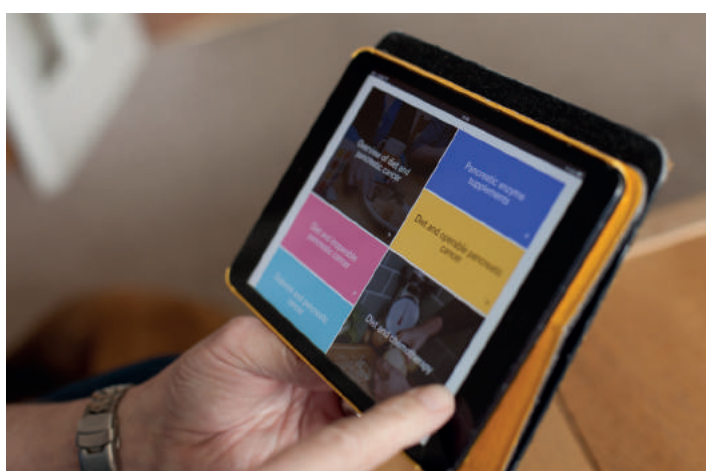
The trial might be testing a new treatment for pancreatic cancer or trying out new ways to give treatments.

Your doctor or nurse can answer any questions you may have and explain the trial to you.



It is up to if you want to take part in the trial.

You can change your mind and stop taking part at any time. It won't affect your care.



If there are any trials available and you would like to know more you can find this information on our website at:

www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/trialfinder

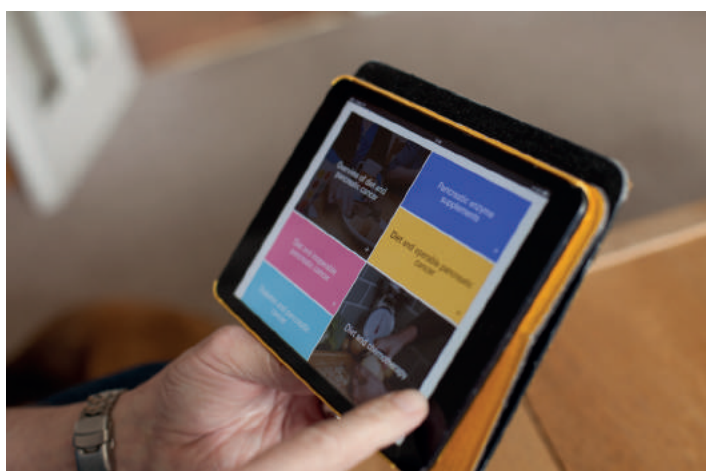
Support from us



You can speak to our specialist nurses on our Support Line on **0808 801 0707**. They can answer any questions you may have.

Or you can email the nurses at:

nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk



You can read more about pancreatic cancer on our website at:

www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk



You can meet other people with pancreatic cancer at our Living with Pancreatic Cancer Support Days.

www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/supportdays



We have an online chat forum. You can chat to others with pancreatic cancer. Your family and friends might find it useful too.

Find out more on our website at:

www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/getsupport

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.

We would like to thank BTM's work groups of people with learning disabilities and everyone else who has been involved in the development and testing of these booklets.

Pancreatic Cancer UK

6th Floor Westminster Tower
3 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SP

020 3535 7090

enquiries@pancreaticcancer.org.uk

pancreaticcancer.org.uk



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Produced with support from The James Tudor Foundation

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Review date July 2022

Registered charity number 1112708 (England and Wales), and SC046392 (Scotland)