

# **Pancreatic Cancer**

## **Surgery to remove pancreatic cancer**



**An EasyRead Booklet**



## Contents:

This EasyRead booklet is about pancreatic cancer if you can have surgery to remove the cancer.

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

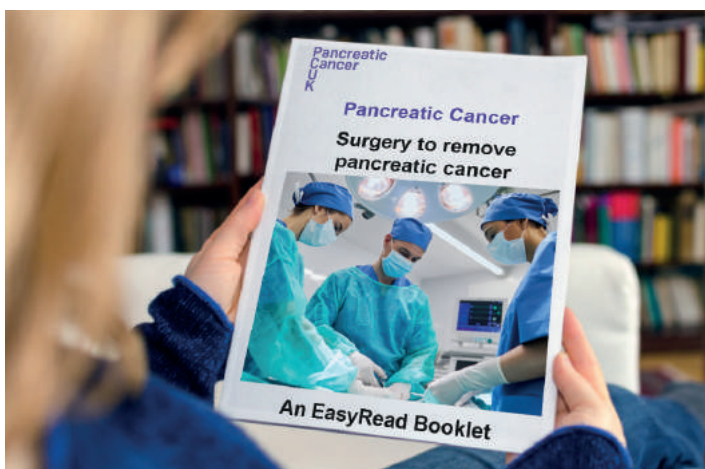
Section	Page
About this booklet	4
Specialist centres	5
Who will I be treated by?	6
Other people that you might see	7
Talking to your doctor and nurse	8
Treatments	9
Treating jaundice before surgery	10
Surgery	11
Bypass surgery	12
Side effects after surgery	13
Chemotherapy after surgery	14
Support from us	15

## About this booklet



This EasyRead booklet can help if you have just been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and have been told you can 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](mailto: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.



The team will always be involved in decisions about your treatment.



Your tests may be done at hospitals close to where you live, or at the specialist centre.

Surgery will be done at the specialist centre.

## 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



**Surgeon** – a doctor who does operations.



**Oncologist** – a doctor who treats cancer.



**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



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.



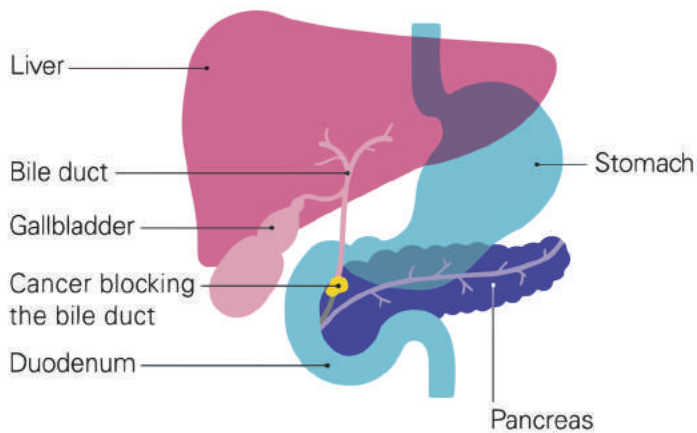
Don't be afraid to ask the doctor or nurse any questions you have about your treatment.

## Treating jaundice before surgery



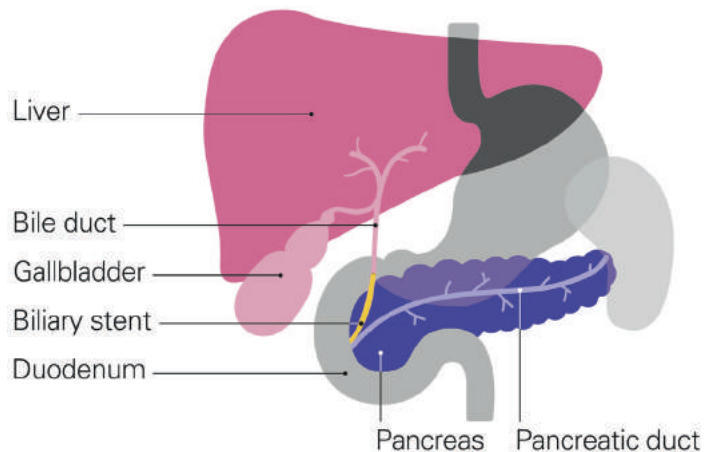
If the cancer blocks the bile duct, it can cause jaundice.

Symptoms of jaundice are yellow skin and eyes and itching.



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

**Bile** is a fluid that helps to break down food.



If you have jaundice and you are not well enough for surgery yet, you may need to have a stent put in.

A stent is a small tube which is put into the bile duct to open up the blockage.



If you are well enough to have the surgery to remove the cancer you will not need to have a stent put in.

The surgery will treat the jaundice.



# Surgery



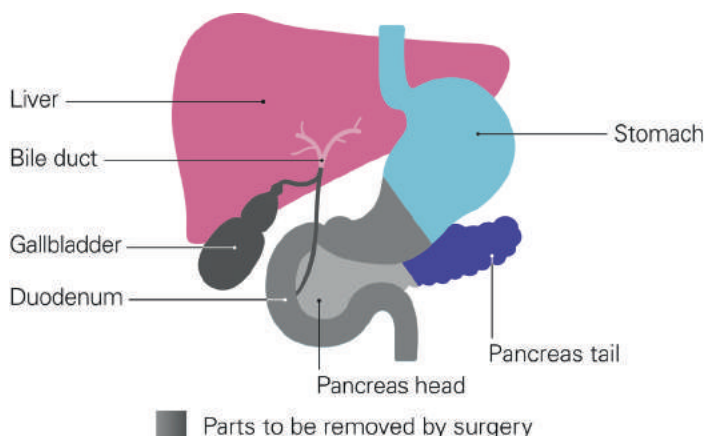
You may be able to have surgery if the cancer hasn't spread outside the pancreas. You will need to be well enough to have the operation.

Surgery to remove the cancer is the best treatment for pancreatic cancer.



There are different types of operation. The most common surgery is the Whipple's operation.

The surgeon will remove part of your pancreas and sometimes part of the organs around your pancreas as well.



Surgery may remove:

- part of the stomach
- part of the intestine
- part of the gallbladder.



The operation can take 4 to 7 hours.

The surgeon will try to remove all of the cancer to give you the best chance of recovery.



## Bypass surgery



Sometimes when the surgeon starts the operation they find that it isn't possible to remove the cancer.



Instead the surgeon may decide to do a different operation, called bypass surgery.

The surgery won't cure your cancer but it will help with symptoms.



The doctor will speak to you about your treatment.

## Side effects after surgery



After surgery you may have pain.

Your doctor can give you painkillers to help with this.



You might have problems with eating and breaking down your food.

There are ways to help you manage this.



Some people can get diabetes. This is where your blood sugar levels are too high.

You may need medicine to control this.



You may feel very tired after surgery.

There is more information about side effects in our booklet:

**Pancreatic Cancer** - Treating symptoms and getting support.



## Chemotherapy after surgery



You should be offered chemotherapy after surgery to try to stop the cancer coming back.

You will start chemotherapy when you have recovered from the surgery. This may be up to 12 weeks after your operation.



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

It is given through a tube which is put into your hand, arm or chest. You may also 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 can make you ill.



Your doctor or nurse can help you cope with the side effects.

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



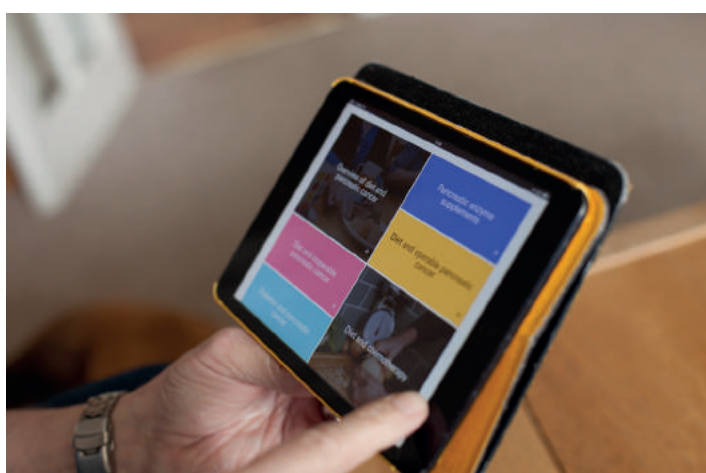
## Support from us



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](mailto:nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk)**



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

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

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