

Health Awareness

What You Should Know About Pancreatic Cancer

(NAPS)—If you or someone you love is ever among the more than 57,000 Americans expected to be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year, knowing a few facts may help improve your outcomes.

What It Is

The pancreas is an organ of the digestive system located deep in the upper part of the abdomen, behind the stomach and in front of the spine. Pancreatic cancer has a five-year survival rate in just the single digits and has no early detection tests and no effective long-term treatments. Unless the cancer is surgically removed in its earliest stages, there is no cure, though scientists say doctors may soon have access to a blood test that can detect this and several other kinds of cancer.

There are, however, certain symptoms to be aware of such as loss of appetite, abdominal pain that radiates to the back, new-onset diabetes in someone over 50, jaundice, and itchy skin. Any of these symptoms should be discussed with your doctor or medical team.

What Treatments Are Available

Surgery is the most effective way to achieve long-term survival and has improved significantly over the past two decades. Other treatment options include chemotherapy and radiation, and in many cases, these treatments are now being administered to patients prior to surgery to help shrink the tumor so that the patient then becomes a surgical candidate. There are also several ongoing clinical trials that are putting new treatment options on the horizon. These trials involve immunotherapy, which uses the body's own immune system to help fight cancer, and targeted therapy, which is aimed at the changes in cancer cells that help them grow, divide and spread. There is also ongoing research to determine if therapies used to treat other cancers will be effective in treating pancreatic cancer.

What's Being Done

The Lustgarten Foundation, the world's largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research, is dedicated to curing this devastating disease by funding scientific and clinical research related to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention



Photo Credit: Diana Davis Creative

Researchers are working on new and better ways to detect and treat pancreatic cancer—and you can help.

of pancreatic cancer; providing research information and clinical support services to patients, caregivers and individuals at high risk; and increasing public awareness and hope for those dealing with this disease.

From basic science to the clinic, Lustgarten-funded researchers are at the forefront of the most promising breakthroughs. “Our researchers are achieving significant milestones in understanding and treating this disease and in detecting it earlier—advancements that are already improving patient outcomes and enabling some patients to live longer,” said Kerri Kaplan, President and CEO of the Lustgarten Foundation. The Lustgarten Foundation is the only non-profit in the world to have four labs dedicated completely to pancreatic cancer research, which means more resources, time and talent are being put toward this disease, where they are urgently needed.

How You Can Get Involved

Join one of the nearly 300 events throughout local communities that are held annually or register to participate in one of the Lustgarten Foundation's Pancreatic Cancer Research Walks taking place in more than 30 locations across the country. Thanks to separate funding to support administrative expenses, 100 percent of every donation goes directly to pancreatic cancer research.

Where To Learn More

To learn more about the Lustgarten Foundation's research program, as well as treatment options and patient resources, or to donate or get involved, visit www.lustgarten.org or call toll-free 866-789-1000.