



Tips for newly-diagnosed pancreatic cancer patients

Learn the Basics and Be Informed

- Obtain detailed information about your specific diagnosis from the doctor. This will help you understand your diagnosis and make informed decisions.
- Always ask for a copy of your medical records and lab results, including: CT scan, CA 19-9, MRI, EUS, ERCP and biopsy results. These results are very important when meeting with other doctors, especially when getting a second opinion.
- Visit the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network website at www.pancan.org and contact a Patient and Liaison Services (PALS) Associate. PALS Associates can answer your questions about pancreatic cancer, provide treatment information, search for clinical trials, and offer additional resources on pain management, dietary concerns, side effects, finances and support.

Seek a Second Opinion

- Schedule an appointment with a doctor who specializes in pancreatic cancer. Your current doctor may be an excellent resource, but it is important to see a pancreatic cancer specialist.
- Pancreatic cancer specialists see and treat a high number of individuals with pancreatic cancer. Select the most qualified doctor to treat you. Treating cancer is a team effort so your doctor should not be offended if you decide to seek a second opinion.

Learn about Treatment Options

- Discuss treatment options with your oncologist. Your options may include surgery, radiation chemotherapy, and/or targeted therapy and may be given as a standard protocol or as part of a clinical trial. Making decisions in a timely manner is important, but getting care from the appropriate doctor/institution is even more important. Do not feel rushed – get the information you need!
- Consider participating in a clinical trial. The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network recommends that all patients consider clinical trials when exploring treatment options. Clinical trials are research studies that investigate new treatments or new combinations of treatments. They are the only way for researchers to determine whether new treatments are beneficial for pancreatic cancer patients. In addition, clinical trials provide patients the opportunity to receive new, potentially better treatments.
- Consider all of your options when discussing treatment with your healthcare team. Be an educated partner in your cancer care.

Be Your Own Advocate

- Clear and open communication with your healthcare team is crucial to receiving good health care. However, patients often do not speak up for themselves. Don't be passive - speak up and take an active role in your cancer care!
- Make decisions together with your doctor. If you don't understand the information presented to you, ask as many questions as you need to in order to feel comfortable and knowledgeable.



Prepare for your Appointment

Write down all of your questions before meeting with your doctor. If possible, email, fax or mail this information to your doctor's office ahead of time so the doctor is aware and prepared at your next appointment. Some basic questions to ask are:

Questions about your diagnosis:

- What is my diagnosis? What type of pancreatic cancer do I have?
- What is the stage of my cancer? What does this mean?
- What are the symptoms that I may experience from the cancer?

Questions about a doctor's experience:

- How many people with pancreatic cancer do you care for each year? What have been the results for these people? Did they have a similar diagnosis?
- Do you work with a multidisciplinary team? Who are they and what are their specialties?

Questions about treatment:

- What treatment(s) do you recommend? Can my tumor be removed through surgery? Why or why not?
- Are there any clinical trials available to me at this hospital? At other local hospitals?
- What are the potential benefits and risks of each of my treatment options?

Questions about side effects:

- What are the potential side effects of my treatment options? What medication(s) will be prescribed to help manage my side effects? Do these medications have additional side effects?
- Do I need to change or modify my diet? Will I need to take pancreatic enzymes or vitamins?
- Do you have a dietitian or nutritionist that you recommend?

Questions about social concerns:

- Will my ability to work, travel or drive be affected?
- Will I need to spend time in the hospital?
- Will I have physical limitations?
- Are there any lifestyle changes I should make?

Find Resources

Our Patient and Liaison Services (PALS) program has highly trained Associates ready to help. PALS is a comprehensive and free information service for pancreatic cancer patients, their families and healthcare professionals. PALS has information about treatment options, clinical trials, specialists in pancreatic cancer, diet and nutrition, side effect and symptom management, support resources and more.

Call today and speak with a compassionate and knowledgeable PALS Associate. PALS Associates are available toll-free at 877-272-6226 or by email at pals@pancan.org, Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m., Pacific Time.