

Conversation Guide: Talking to Your Doctor About Pancreatic Cancer

It can be difficult to speak with a doctor about pancreatic cancer. Symptoms are often vague and hard to describe and talking about risk factors and family history may not be easy. Understanding your symptoms, risk factors and family history can help you feel more confident. Since there is no standard early detection test for pancreatic cancer, speaking with your doctor may help them detect it earlier before it has spread to other organs, providing more treatment options.

You should feel comfortable and supported by your healthcare team. PanCAN strongly recommends seeking a healthcare team that suits all your physical, mental and emotional needs.

Below is a guide to help you understand your risk and identify your symptoms. All you need to do is print it, fill it out and start a conversation with your care team.

Know the Symptoms

Patients with pancreatic cancer typically experience vague symptoms, which could be confused with many other abdominal or gastrointestinal issues. Circle any symptoms you're experiencing and discuss them with your care team:



Abdominal and/or mid-to-upper back pain



Weight loss



Nausea/loss of appetite



Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)



A Change in stool (oily or watery)



Recent diabetes

Know the Risk Factors

Although the exact causes of pancreatic cancer are not yet well understood, research studies have identified certain risk factors. Check all that apply to you:

- I am over 60 years old
- I have chronic or hereditary pancreatitis
- I am a smoker
- I am obese
- I have had diabetes for more than 5 years
- I have a family history of pancreatic cancer

If you have a family history of pancreatic, breast or ovarian cancer or melanoma, let your care team know, as all these diseases may share common genetic syndromes.

Relation to Me	Type of Cancer	Age at Diagnosis	Deceased?	Current Age

PanCAN Patient Services

PanCAN shares resources and speaks with more pancreatic cancer patients than any organization in the world. Patient Services provides comprehensive, personalized information about the disease, specialists, treatment options, clinical trials, diet and nutrition, Know Your Tumor® precision medicine service and much more.

Contact Patient Services toll-free at 877-2-PANCAN or patientservices@pancan.org, M – F, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. PT. Services offered in English and Spanish.