



## Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

The pancreas is an organ that is about 6 inches long. It's located deep in your belly between your stomach and backbone in the upper part of your abdomen. Your liver, intestine, spleen and stomach surround your pancreas.

Pancreatic cancer is a leading cause of cancer death largely because there are no detection tools to diagnose the disease in its early stages when surgical removal of the tumor is still possible.

### Symptoms may include:

Early cancer of the pancreas often doesn't cause symptoms. When the cancer grows larger, you may notice one or more of these common symptoms:

- Dark urine, pale stools, and yellow skin and eyes from jaundice
- Pain in the upper part of your belly
- Pain in the middle part of your back that doesn't go away when you shift your position
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stools that float in the toilet

Also, advanced cancer may cause these general symptoms:

- Weakness or feeling very tired
- Loss of appetite or feelings of fullness
- Weight loss for no known reason

## Risk Factors for Cancer of the Pancreas:

**SMOKING:** Smoking tobacco is the most important risk factor for pancreatic cancer. People who smoke tobacco are more likely than nonsmokers to develop this disease. Heavy smokers are most at risk.

**DIABETES:** People with type II diabetes, also known as adult-onset diabetes, are more likely than other people to develop pancreatic cancer over time.

**FAMILY HISTORY:** Having a mother, father, sister, or brother with pancreatic cancer increases the risk of developing the disease by 2-3 times.

**INFLAMMATION OF THE PANCREAS:** Pancreatitis is a painful inflammation of the pancreas. Having pancreatitis for a long time (called chronic pancreatitis) may increase the risk of pancreatic cancer.

**OBESITY:** People who are overweight or obese are slightly more likely than other people to develop pancreatic cancer.

**ETHNICITY:** African-Americans have a higher incidence of pancreatic cancer compared to individuals of Asian, Hispanic or Caucasian descent. There is also a higher incidence of pancreatic cancer among Ashkenazi Jews, possibly due to a gene mutation involving the breast cancer BRCA gene.



*Be aware of what your body is telling you!*



# HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time



## National Family Caregivers Month 10 Tips for Family Caregivers



Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!



Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.



Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.



Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.

1



Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.

2



Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.

3



Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.

4

7



Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.

6



Make sure legal documents are in order.

5



Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

8

9

10

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ACTION  
NETWORK

CAN

CaregiverAction.org



*The simple act of caring is heroic.*

