

The Fight to End Pancreatic Cancer

FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Pancreatic cancer is one of the deadliest forms of cancer

- 4th leading cause of cancer-related death in Canada. It is projected to surpass breast and colorectal cancer to become the second leading cause of cancer death in the next decade. (In 2016, pancreatic cancer surpassed breast cancer to become the 3rd deadliest cancer in the US).
- In 2017, it is estimated that 5,500 Canadians (53,670 Americans) will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and 4,800 Canadians (43,090 Americans) will die from this disease. Seventy-one (71%) percent of patients will die within the first year of diagnosis.
- Highest mortality rate of all the major cancers – 92% of patients die within 5 years of their diagnosis and 75% die within the first year – most within the first 3-6 months.
- A silent killer – it's difficult to detect and spreads so quickly. Vague symptoms including back/abdominal pain, weight loss, jaundice, loss of appetite, nausea, diabetes and changes in stool and are generally attributed to other less serious and more common conditions.
- While overall cancer incidence and death rates are declining, the incidence and death rates for pancreatic cancer are increasing.
- Pancreatic cancer is the source of 10% of deaths and only 5% of trials and receives less than 2% of research funding.
- The cause of the majority of pancreatic cancer cases is unknown. Few risk factors are known - family history of the disease, smoking, age, poor diet, diabetes and the BRCA1&2 mutations are thought to be contributing factors. More research is needed to understand the direct relationship to this disease.

Treatment options for pancreatic cancer are limited

- There are no detection tools to diagnose this disease in its early stages when surgical removal of the tumor is still possible.
- At this time, there are no proven biomarkers, or clues detectable in the blood or other bodily fluids, that could indicate the presence of a pancreatic tumor.
- Surgery offers the best chance for long term survival. Unfortunately, only 15% of patients diagnosed are eligible. The most common form of surgery for removal of a pancreatic tumor is the whipple procedure and may be followed with chemotherapy or a combination of chemotherapy/radiation called adjuvant therapy.
- Approximately 52% of all patients are diagnosed when the metastatic (stage 4) disease that has spread to surrounding organs and lymph nodes leaving little hope for survival; only 2% will survive five years.
- For the patients who are not surgical candidates, chemotherapy or chemotherapy with radiation is typically offered. The International standard for treatment of advanced pancreatic cancer for the past 10 years has been gemcitabine (Gemzar®). Other drugs currently approved to treat pancreatic cancer include: Fluorouracil (5-FU), Erlotinib (Tarceva), Folfirinox and albumin-bound paclitaxel (Abraxane). While these treatments can be beneficial in treating some patients, they are not considered curative.

Pancreatic Cancer Canada is proud to be the only national foundation dedicated to fighting pancreatic cancer. We are committed to improving pancreatic cancer survival and creating hope through awareness, education, research and advocacy.