Ready to start planning your care? Call us at 800-525-2225 to make an appointment.
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Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

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Pancreatic Cancer
Refer a Patient
& Treatment

ABOUT US

Our mission, vision & core values

Leadership

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Give to MSK

Call 800-525-2225
Available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern time)

Make an Appointment

VIDEO | 02:05

Advice for people with a new diagnosis of pancreatic cancer

Our experts share advice for people who just learned they have pancreatic cancer.

Video Details →

The MSK difference: How we care for pancreatic cancer

A team of pancreatic cancer experts

MSK's team of experts work closely together on your treatment plan. You will have one of the most experienced cancer care teams in the country. That high level of experience often means better treatment results.

Treatments based on the tumor's genetic information

MSK offers the latest tests to get information about a tumor's genetic changes (mutations or variants). Tumor genetic profiling tests, such as liquid biopsies, show whether cancer is caused by genetic changes.

We can then choose a treatment that targets your tumor's molecular changes. Targeted therapies only target cancer cells and match the exact kind of pancreatic cancer tumor you have.

Follow-up care and support

Life after cancer can be filled with changes you did not expect. Our survivorship team is here to lead you through those changes. They will be your guide to living beyond cancer.

Caring for you after cancer treatment is part of MSK's focus on supporting the whole person. Our goal is to improve your quality of life before and after your cancer care.

Our survivorship team has deep experience in helping people who have completed their cancer care. They create a plan for you that focuses on your health and wellness. Our survivorship team treat any problems related to cancer therapy.

Living Beyond Cancer Care

MSK offers resources to help you with the lasting effects of cancer on your body, emotions, and day-to-day life. Your survivorship team expert can help you choose resources that are best for you, including:

- Pain management
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Integrative medicine therapies
- Skin, nail, and hair health
- Sexual health and fertility

See all of MSK's Living Beyond Cancer resources.

MSK's Pancreatic Cyst Surveillance Program

MSK has a special program for people who have benign (not cancer) pancreatic cysts or precancerous lesions. MSK's Pancreatic Cyst Surveillance Program is among the largest of its kind in the United States. You will be carefully monitored by our experts. They will know when the time has come for you to need treatment.

The treatment for pancreatic cysts is surgery. The surgery methods we use for pancreatic cyst removal are the same as for pancreatic cancer surgery.

Pancreatic cancer surgery

Our surgery team does about 350 pancreatic cancer operations each year. That's among the most surgeries for pancreatic cancer in New York City, as well as in North America. Pancreatic surgery is a very complex operation. Patients at hospitals that do a higher number of pancreatic surgeries have better treatments results.

Our surgeons are experts at all surgeries for pancreatic cancer:

- The Whipple procedure is done to remove a tumor in the head of the pancreas.
- Distal pancreatectomy (PAN-kree-uh-TEK-toh-mee) is a surgery to remove a tumor from the body or tail of the pancreas.
- Total pancreatectomy is a surgery to remove the whole pancreas.
- Central pancreatectomy is a surgery to remove the middle of the pancreas.

Chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer

Chemotherapy is a treatment that uses strong drugs to kill cancer cells, or stop or slow their growth. Chemotherapy (chemo) can help people with pancreatic cancer live longer.

We often combine chemo with surgery or radiation therapy for tumors that have not spread. You may have chemo after surgery for tumors that are only in the pancreas. It's also a treatment for pancreatic tumors that have spread to other parts of the body.

Radiation therapy for pancreatic cancer

Radiation therapy is a treatment that uses precise high-energy beams to kill cancer cells. MSK experts use the latest methods available to deliver powerful doses of radiation therapy. We use radiation therapy:

- Along with chemotherapy and surgery to kill off tumors and any cancer cells that are only in the pancreas.
- To shrink locally advanced tumors so you can have surgery. Locally advanced tumors are tumors that have spread and grown into blood vessels and lymph nodes.
- To help with pain and other symptoms of pancreatic cancer that has spread.

Treatments are based on whether pancreatic cancer has spread

Treatment for localized pancreatic tumors

A localized pancreatic tumor is a tumor that's only in the pancreas. It has not spread and grown into the blood vessels (arteries and veins). It's also known as a resectable tumor, which means a tumor that can be removed by surgery.

Only about 10 or 15 out of every 100 people with pancreatic cancer are diagnosed at this stage. The disease is easier to cure when it's only in the pancreas.

MSK often recommends surgery for these tumors. After the operation, you may have chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or both. These treatments help keep the cancer from coming back.

Treatment for locally advanced tumors

Locally advanced tumors have spread only to the area near the pancreas. They have grown into blood vessels or lymph nodes. About 30 to 40 out of every 100 people with pancreatic cancer are diagnosed at this stage.

MSK often does not recommend surgery right away for these tumors. There's a high risk the operation can harm other parts of your body. You may have surgery after chemotherapy and radiation.

Treatment for metastatic pancreatic cancer

Metastatic cancer means the cancer has spread beyond the pancreas to other organs, such as the liver or lungs. MSK recommends chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Our goal is to help you live longer, manage your pain or discomfort, and improve your quality of life.

People often do not have symptoms of pancreatic cancer until it has spread. Unfortunately, about half of the people with pancreatic cancer are diagnosed after it has metastasized (spread). This is stage 4 pancreatic cancer.

Relief from pancreatic cancer pain and other symptoms of pancreatic cancer

Pancreatic cancer can be painful. Pancreatic cancer can cause back pain. People often feel pain in the lower pack from pancreatic cancer.

MSK was the country's first cancer center to have a service just for treating pain in people with cancer. Our pain specialists can help you with pain symptoms, including pain that is sudden, very bad, or does not go away. Our goal is to keep you as comfortable as possible.

Learn more about how we can help with pain.

PREVIOUS
Pancreatic Cancer Stages 0, 1, 2, 3 & 4

NEXT
Pancreatic Cancer Surgery

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