

Pancreatic Cancer Treatment Information for Patients



About the UPMC Pancreatic Cancer Center

Our team of expert surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, gastroenterologists, and other specialists work together to provide comprehensive, compassionate care to patients with pancreatic cancer and related conditions.

Conditions We Treat

- Exocrine pancreatic cancer/adenocarcinoma of the pancreas
- Endocrine pancreatic cancer/islet cell tumors
- Locally advanced pancreatic cancer, which has spread to nearby organs and tissues
- Metastatic pancreatic cancer, which has spread to distant parts of the body
- Ampullary cancer
- Bile duct cancer (also called cholangiocarcinoma)
- Cysts and cystic neoplasms, including intraductal papillary mucinous neoplasms (IPMNs) and mucinous cystic neoplasms (MCN)
- Pancreatic solid pseudopapillary tumors (SPN)
- Acinar cell carcinoma
- Polyps and cancers of the first part of the small intestine, also called the duodenum
- Pancreatic sarcoma, an extremely rare cancer that develops in the tissues that hold together pancreas cells
- Benign (non-cancerous) pancreatic diseases

Treatments and Services

All patients undergo a thorough medical/family history, physical examination, and evaluation to confirm the type and stage of their cancer, which may include diagnostic imaging tests like a CT scan, MRI, PET scan, Gallium scan, and endoscopic ultrasound, and a needle biopsy via endoscopic ultrasound.

Once a patient's diagnosis is confirmed, our experts work together to develop an individualized treatment plan based on their overall health and goals for treatment. Treatments may include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, enrollment in clinical trials, or a combination of therapies. Supportive services to help manage symptoms and address the physical and emotional aspects of care are also included in each patient's treatment plan.

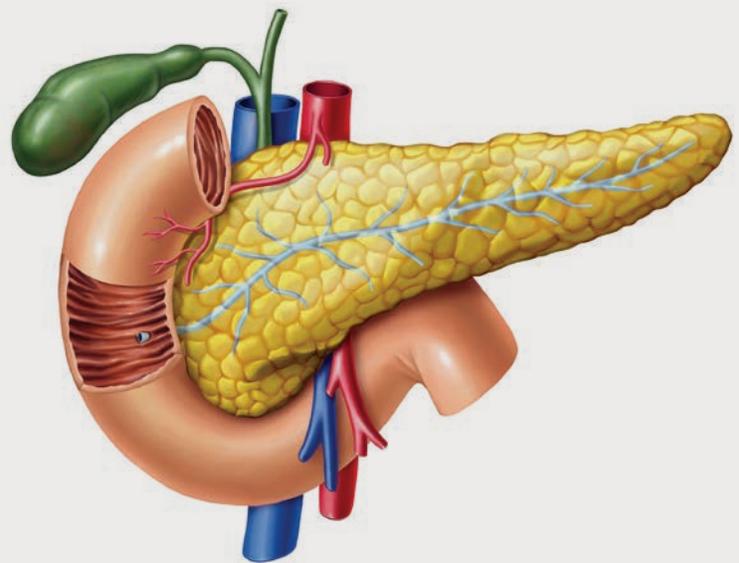
Surgery

UPMC's pancreatic surgery program is one of the busiest in the world, providing traditional open, minimally invasive, and robotic-assisted surgeries. Our surgeons were among the first to develop robotic pancreas surgery and have more experience with these procedures than anyone in the United States, including more than 750 robotic Whipple procedures and more than 1,200 robotic pancreatic operations. Studies show that patients who receive surgery at a high-volume center, like UPMC, have better outcomes.

If surgery is recommended, your surgeon will decide which type of procedure is best for you based on the type, stage, and location of your cancer, your overall health, and your goals for treatment.

Medical Oncology

Chemotherapy plays an important role in pancreatic cancer treatment. It can be used alone, or together with other therapies like surgery and radiation. UPMC's doctors were among the first to use chemotherapy before surgery (called neoadjuvant chemotherapy) to treat pancreatic cancer, which can have a positive impact on survival rates. Our surgeons and medical oncologists work together to help deliver individualized treatment plans before and after surgery based on a patient's tumor.



Radiation Oncology

Radiation therapy can be given alone, or together with chemotherapy before or after surgery. At UPMC, our patients have access to the latest variety of advanced radiation planning and delivery systems, including stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT), a precise form of radiation therapy that targets tumors in a pinpoint fashion and minimizes damage to the healthy tissue around a tumor.

Clinical Trials

UPMC offers clinical trials for patients with all stages of pancreatic cancer. While clinical trials are not right for every patient, our expert team can assess your individual needs and determine if a trial is the right approach for you.

SURGERY BY THE NUMBERS

Total Pancreas Surgeries at UPMC per Year: **250** | Total Robotic Pancreas Surgeries at UPMC per Year: **150**

Supportive Therapies and Services

Our team understands the physical and emotional aspects of pancreatic cancer treatment and works together to help patients at each step of the way. Our supportive therapies and services include:

- Nutritional support
- Fertility preservation for patients of childbearing age
- Psychological counseling
- Palliative care for symptom management, family support, psychological care, and spiritual care, as well as help with discharge planning and integration with outpatient and home-based services
- UPMC Hillman Cancer Center's Wellness and Integrative Oncology Program, which uses movement, touch, nutrition, and mindfulness within conventional cancer care to address and improve symptoms and quality of life

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between open surgery and robotic surgery?

During open surgery for pancreatic cancer, the surgeon makes a large cut to open a patient's abdomen to remove the tumor and organs/tissues affected by the cancer. After surgery, patients usually stay in the hospital for 10-12 days, and recovery takes several months.



During robotic surgery, the surgeon uses a surgical robot with special tools, including a camera and other instruments, to make small cuts in the patient's abdomen. The surgeon operates the tools from a computer console next to the patient. Robotic surgery allows the operation to be performed with less blood loss and fewer complications. After surgery, patients usually stay in the hospital for 6-8 days and recovery can be faster than with open surgery.

What questions should I ask my doctor(s)?

It's important to understand the type of pancreatic cancer that you have and what your treatment plan will be. We recommend asking your doctor/surgeon the following questions:

- What type of pancreatic cancer do I have?
- Has it spread to other parts of my body?
- What is my treatment plan?
- How do I know if my surgery or treatment has worked?
- Do I need chemotherapy before or after my surgery?
- How much experience do you have treating pancreatic cancer?
- How many pancreatic surgeries have you performed?
- How many Whipple surgeries have you performed?
- What kind of follow-up treatment will I need?



WHIPPLE EXPERTISE

The American Cancer Society recommends choosing a center that performs at least **15-20** Whipple procedures each year. UPMC's surgeons perform an average of **120** Whipple surgeries each year, of which **80** are robotic.

Our Experts

Program Leadership



Amer H. Zureikat, MD, FACS

Co-director, UPMC Pancreatic Cancer Program

Vice Chair of Surgery for Surgical Oncology

Associate Professor of Surgery,

University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Surgical Oncology

Kenneth K. Lee, MD
Alessandro Paniccia, MD
Amer H. Zureikat, MD

Medical Oncology

Vikram Gorantla, MD
Anuradha Krishnamurthy, MBBS, FRCPC
John C. Rhee, MD
Roby A. Thomas, MD

Radiation Oncology

Susannah Ellsworth, MD

Gastroenterology

Randall Brand, MD
Adam Slivka, MD
Kevin M. McGrath, MD
Jennifer Chennat, MD
Rohit Das, MD
Kenneth E. Fasanella, MD
Asif Khalid, MD
Harkirat Singh, MD
Savreet Sarkaria, MD

Nutrition Services

Joyce Diacopoulos, RD
Eric Capozzoli, MS, RD
Michelle Davies, MS, RDN

Nurse Coordinator

Shavala Thomas, LPN

Physician Assistants

Lauren Stitt, PA-C
Heather Jones, PA-C

For more information, please call 1-833-655-1762.

A \$23 billion health care provider and insurer, Pittsburgh-based UPMC is inventing new models of patient-centered, cost-effective, accountable care. The largest nongovernmental employer in Pennsylvania, UPMC integrates 92,000 employees, 40 hospitals, 700 doctors' offices and outpatient sites, and a 4 million-member Insurance Services Division, the largest medical insurer in western Pennsylvania. In the most recent fiscal year, UPMC contributed \$1.4 billion in benefits to its communities, including more care to the region's most vulnerable citizens than any other health care institution, and paid more than \$800 million in federal, state, and local taxes. Working in close collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, UPMC shares its clinical, managerial, and technological skills worldwide through its innovation and commercialization arm, UPMC Enterprises, and through UPMC International. *U.S. News & World Report* consistently ranks UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside among the nation's best hospitals in many specialties and ranks UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh on its Honor Roll of America's Best Children's Hospitals. For more information, go to UPMC.com.

UPMC policy prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, genetics, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, familial status, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected group status. Further, UPMC will continue to support and promote equal employment opportunity, human dignity, and racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in UPMC programs and activities. This commitment is made by UPMC in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.