

# Patient information from BMJ

Last published: Oct 14, 2020

## Pancreas cancer: questions to ask your doctor

**Being diagnosed with a serious illness such as pancreas cancer can be a shock. You may find it hard to think of everything you want to ask your doctor.**

It might help to make a list of questions before your appointment. You could also take notes during your visit, or bring a close friend or relative with you to ask questions and jot down information.

Here are some questions you may want to ask.

### General questions

- How advanced is my disease? What is the stage of my cancer?
- Has my cancer spread?
- Do I need more tests to check if it has spread?
- What treatment choices do I have?
- Can you operate?
- Will you be able to help with my symptoms (such as pain)?
- What help or support can I get to help me cope?
- Can I get help with my diet and exercise?

### Questions about surgery

- Why do you think I should (or shouldn't) have surgery?
- Will surgery mean I live longer?
- What kind of operation do you recommend?
- What are the risks of surgery?
- Where would I go to have surgery? Is it a specialist centre?
- How will I feel after the operation?
- Will it be painful afterwards? And how can this be treated?

## Pancreas cancer: questions to ask your doctor

- Will I need to change my diet?
- How long will I be in hospital?
- When will I get back to my normal activities?

### Questions about medicines and other treatments

- What treatments do you recommend?
- Why do I need these treatments? What are the benefits?
- Will they help me live longer or will they just help my symptoms?
- What are the side effects of these treatments?
- Can the side effects be treated?
- How should I expect to feel during treatment?
- How will treatment affect my normal activities?
- How long will treatment go on?
- Will I need to be treated in hospital or can I have treatment as an outpatient?
- How will I know if the treatment is working?
- Are there any clinical trials I could join?

The patient information from *BMJ Best Practice* from which this leaflet is derived is regularly updated. The most recent version of Best Practice can be found at [bestpractice.bmj.com](https://bestpractice.bmj.com). This information is intended for use by health professionals. It is not a substitute for medical advice. It is strongly recommended that you independently verify any interpretation of this material and, if you have a medical problem, see your doctor.

Please see BMJ's full terms of use at: [bmj.com/company/legal-information](https://bmj.com/company/legal-information). BMJ does not make any representations, conditions, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that this material is accurate, complete, up-to-date or fit for any particular purposes.

© BMJ Publishing Group Ltd 2020. All rights reserved.

