Pancreatic
CANCER UK

# Pancreatic cancer

## Treatment if you can't have surgery

An EasyRead Booklet

## Contents:

This EasyRead booklet is about pancreatic cancer if you can’t have surgery.

There are 4 booklets in total.

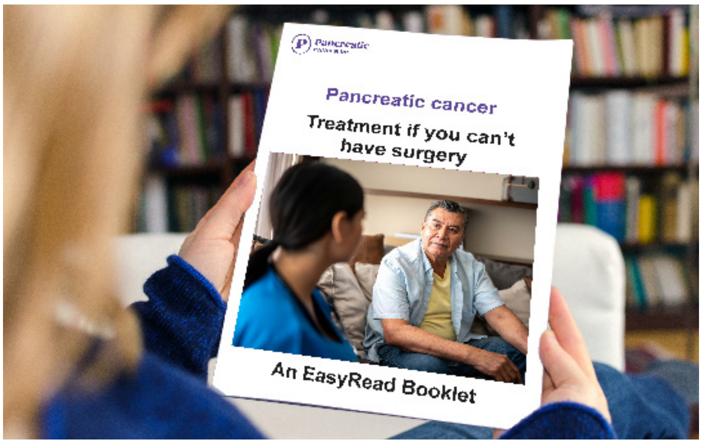
- Pancreatic cancer - What is it? How is it diagnosed?
- Pancreatic cancer - Treatment if you can’t have surgery
- Pancreatic cancer - Surgery to remove pancreatic cancer
- Pancreatic cancer - Treating symptoms and getting support

You can find the booklets at: pancreaticcancer.org.uk/easyread

# About this booklet

This EasyRead booklet can help if you have been told you have pancreatic cancer and you can't have surgery.

It might also be helpful for your family and friends.



Pancreatic cancer

Treatment if you can't have surgery

An EasyRead Booklet

There is a lot to take in when you have pancreatic cancer.

This booklet will give you the information you need.

If you have any questions about anything you read in this booklet speak to your doctor or nurse.

You can also speak to one of our specialist nurses on our Support Line.

They can answer your questions and talk about your worries.

The number is **0808 801 0707**.
It is free to call.

You can also email the nurses at:
nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk

# Who will I be treated by?

The team responsible for your treatment and care is called the multidisciplinary team or **MDT**.

It is based in the hospital and is made up of doctors and nurses.

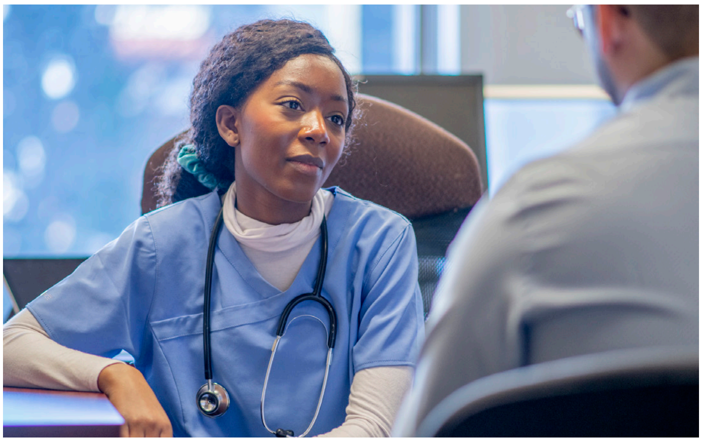
You might not meet everyone in the MDT, but your doctor or nurse should tell you what the MDT have decided.

You will be given a main person to contact, who is usually a specialist nurse. You might hear them called a clinical nurse specialist or **CNS**.

They will give you expert care and advice.

They will support you and be the person you talk to most. They will be part of your MDT.

# Other people that you might see



**Gastroenterologist** – a doctor who treats diseases of the stomach, bowel and pancreas.

**Oncologist** – a doctor who treats cancer.

**Dietitian** – a professional who gives advice about diet and which foods are best to eat.

They also help with any problems you have when you eat.

If your cancer has spread, you may see a **palliative care team**.

They can help manage symptoms like pain and can support you.

They can help at any point during your care.

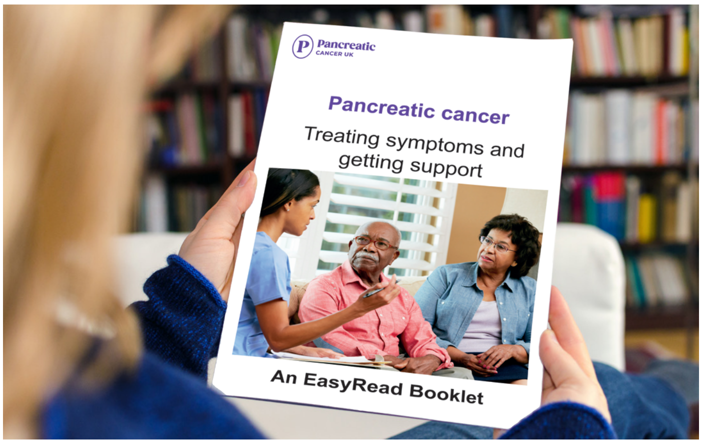
# Talking to your doctor and nurse

Your doctor or nurse should ask you about how you are feeling and if you feel sad or worried.

They should also ask about symptoms or side effects that you may have.

If your doctor or nurse doesn't ask about these things, it's important to tell them about anything that's worrying you.

They should make sure you have all the care and support you need.



Pancreatic CANCER UK

Pancreatic cancer

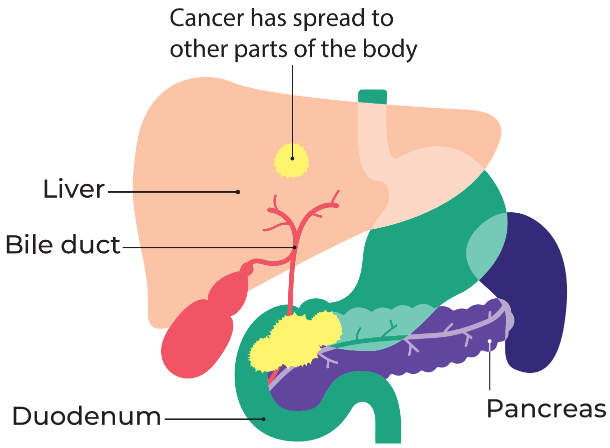
Treating symptoms and getting support

An EasyRead Booklet

For more information on symptoms and side effects look at our booklet:

**Pancreatic cancer - Treating symptoms and getting support.**

# Treatments



If the cancer has spread to blood vessels or other organs then it may not be possible to remove the cancer.

You may be given treatment which aims to slow down the growth of the cancer.

This depends if the doctors think you are well enough to have these treatments.

You will also be given treatment to help with any symptoms and improve how you feel.

You will have an appointment with the doctor to talk about what treatments you can have.

They will tell you what it will involve and about any side effects.

Don’t be afraid to ask the doctor or nurse any questions you have.

**There is more information about treatments on the next pages.**

It’s a good idea to take someone with you, like a family member or friend.

They can help you to remember what is said and take notes for you.

You don’t have to make a decision about treatment right away. You will be given time to think about what the doctor has said.

You might want to talk to other people about it, like your family or your GP.

# Chemotherapy

**Chemotherapy** is when you are given medicine to shrink the cancer or slow down the growth of the cancer.

Chemotherapy won’t cure your cancer but it might help you to live longer and feel better.

Chemotherapy is usually done in the **oncology clinic** at the hospital.

It is given through a tube which is put into your hand, arm or chest.

Chemotherapy can cause side effects. It can make you feel or be sick and feel very tired.

You are also more likely to get an infection that makes you ill.

Your doctor or nurse can help with the side effects.

For example, they might give you medicine to stop you feeling sick.

# Infections

An infection is an emergency if you are having chemotherapy.

It can be life threatening and needs treating right away, as it won't get better without medical help.

Don't ignore the signs of an infection. Signs of an **infection** include:

- a high or low temperature – your chemotherapy team will tell you what to watch out for
- feeling shivery and cold
- headaches
- sore muscles
- a cough or sore throat
- pain or burning when you pee
- feeling generally unwell or tired.

If you have any of these symptoms or feel suddenly unwell you should phone your chemotherapy team on the emergency number they have given you.

## Radiotherapy

**Radiotherapy** uses radiation (strong x-rays) to destroy cancer cells. A machine directs beams of radiation at the cancer from outside the body.

You might have radiotherapy on its own but it is mostly used with chemotherapy. This is called **chemoradiotherapy**.

This won’t cure the cancer but it might slow down the growth of the cancer.

If your cancer has spread to other parts of the body you might have radiotherapy to help with pain.

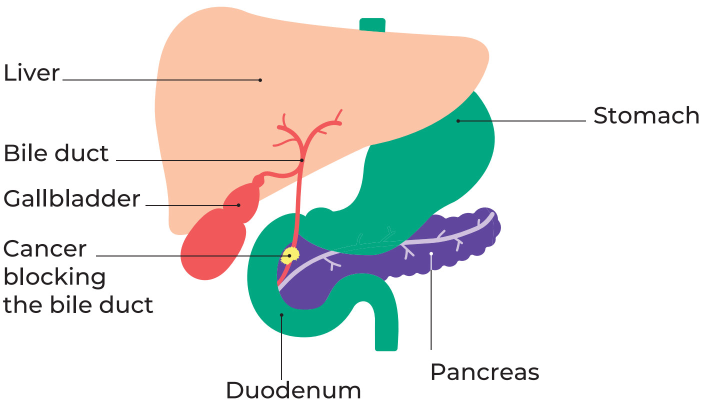
Radiotherapy can cause side effects but they are usually mild.

They can include feeling very tired, feeling and being sick and having runny poo (diarrhoea).

Your doctor or nurse can help with the side effects.

For example, they might give you medicine to stop you feeling sick.

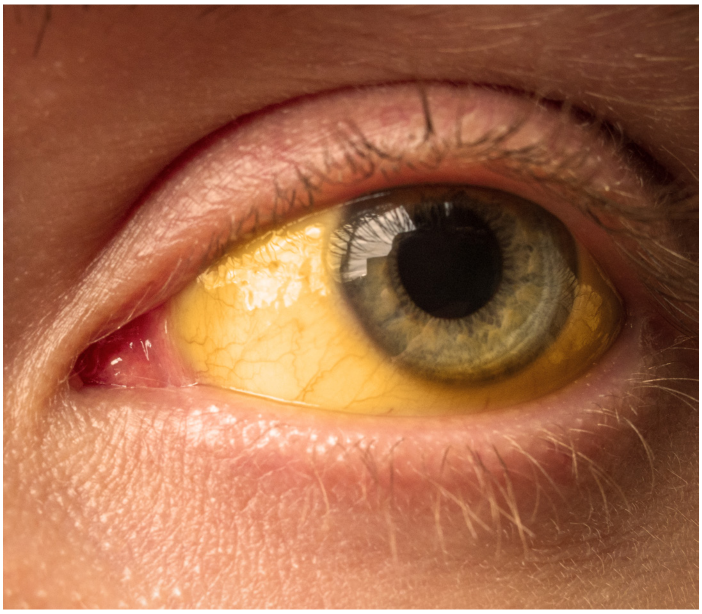
# Treatment for a blocked bile duct



The cancer might block your bile duct.

The **bile duct** is a tube that carries bile from the liver.

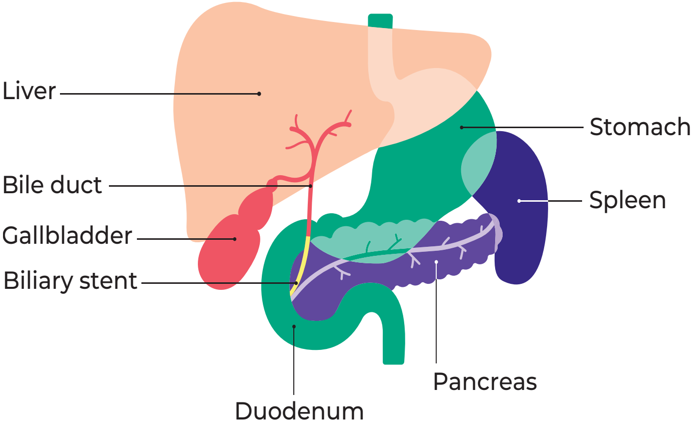
**Bile** is a fluid that helps to break down food.



If your bile duct is blocked, you may get **jaundice**.

Symptoms of jaundice are yellow skin and eyes and itching.

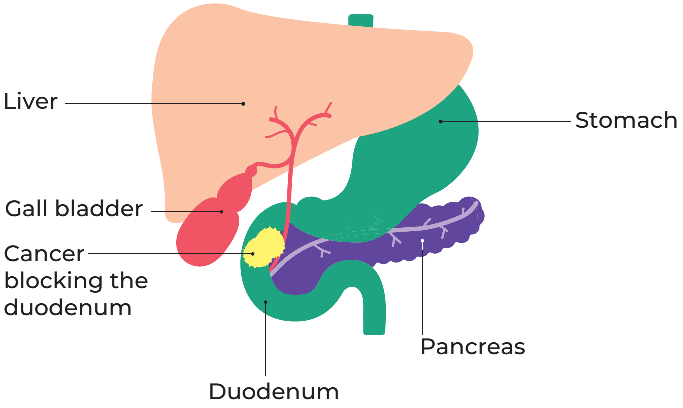
You may also have dark pee and pale poo.



If this happens, a small tube called a **stent** can be put into the bile duct.

The stent will unblock the bile duct and will help the jaundice.

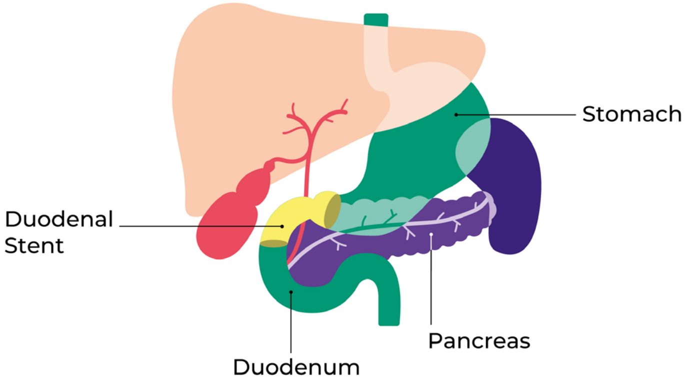
# Treatment for a blocked duodenum



The **duodenum** is the first part of the small bowel.

If your duodenum is blocked, food won't be able to get through to your bowel.

The food will build up in your stomach and make you feel uncomfortable. It will also make you feel sick and be sick.



If this happens, a small tube called a stent can be put into the duodenum.

The stent will open up the duodenum so that food can get through.

# Clinical trials

**Clinical trials** are medical research studies that involve people. They try to find better treatments for pancreatic cancer.

Your doctor or nurse might ask if you want to take part in a trial.

The trial might be testing a new treatment for pancreatic cancer or trying out new ways to give treatments.

Your doctor or nurse can answer any questions you may have and explain the trial to you.

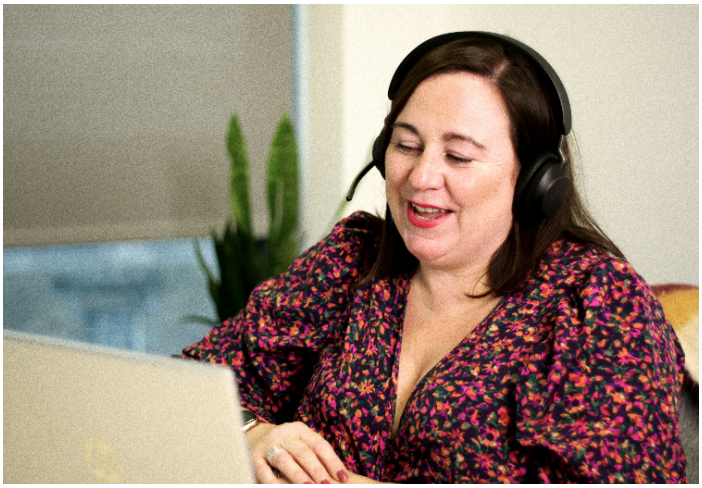
It is up to if you want to take part in the trial.

You can change your mind and stop taking part at any time. It won’t affect your care.

You can search for any trials that are available on our website at:

pancreaticcancer.org.uk/trialfinder

## Support from us



There are lots of ways we can help you. You can speak to our specialist nurses on our Support Line.

They can answer your questions and talk about your worries.

You can call them on **0808 801 0707**. Or you can email the nurses at: nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk

We have lots more information about pancreatic cancer. You can read more on our website.

Go to: pancreaticcancer.org.uk/information

We have videos about pancreatic cancer.

They can help you understand your treatment and care.

Go to: pancreaticcancer.org.uk/videos

We are here for you. If you or someone you care about has pancreatic cancer, we are here to help.

Find out all the ways we can support you. Go to: pancreaticcancer.org.uk/support

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CANCER UK

This information has been produced by the Support and Information Team at Pancreatic Cancer UK and BTM, who specialise in accessible information.

We would like to thank BTM's work groups of people with learning disabilities and everyone else who has been involved in the development and testing of these booklets.

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