

- An estimated 43,140 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the U.S., and over 36,800 will die from the disease.
- Pancreatic cancer is one of the few cancers for which survival has not improved substantially over nearly 40 years.
- Pancreatic cancer is the 4th leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States.
- Pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. 94% of pancreatic cancer patients will die within five years of diagnosis – only 6% will survive more than five years. 75% of patients die within the first year of diagnosis.
- The average life expectancy after diagnosis with metastatic disease is just three to six months.
- Few risk factors for developing pancreatic cancer are defined. Family history of the disease, smoking, age, and diabetes are risk factors.
- Pancreatic cancer may cause only vague symptoms that could indicate many different conditions within the abdomen or gastrointestinal tract.
- Symptoms include pain (usually abdominal or back pain), weight loss, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), loss of appetite, nausea, changes in stool, and diabetes.
- Treatment options for pancreatic cancer are limited. Surgical removal of the tumor is possible in only approximately 15% of patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Chemotherapy or chemotherapy together with radiation is typically offered to patients whose tumors cannot be removed surgically. Only three drugs are FDA-approved for the treatment of pancreatic cancer: fluorouracil (5-FU), gemcitabine (Gemzar®), and erlotinib (Tarceva®).
- Pancreatic cancer is a leading cause of cancer death largely because there are no detection tools to diagnose the disease in its early stages when surgical removal of the tumor is still possible.
- The National Cancer Institute (NCI) spent an estimated \$89.4 million on pancreatic cancer research in 2009. This represented a mere 2% of the NCI's approximate \$5 billion cancer research budget for that year.

*Source for statistics: American Cancer Society: Cancer Facts & Figures 2010 and NCI Funded Research Portfolio.*