

UCLA Joins the Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection (PRECEDE) Consortium to Transform Early Detection and Survival Rates

Dr. Timothy Donahue, Director of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases and Garry Shandling Chair in Pancreatic Surgery at David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, has joined the Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection (PRECEDE) Consortium as a Principal Investigator. This Consortium brings together an international, multi-institutional collaborative group of experts with the aim to increase the 5-year survival rate from 10% to 50% in the next 10 years. With Dr. Donahue as a Principal Investigator, UCLA patients with a family history of pancreatic cancer or individuals who carry pathogenic genes will be able to enroll in the PRECEDE study for longitudinal follow up.

The PRECEDE Study is an observational long-term study of people with an increased risk for pancreatic cancer due to family history, a history of chronic pancreatitis or pancreatic cysts, or the presence of specific gene mutations linked to the disease. Study participants have blood work every 6 to 12 months with additional imaging collected for those in defined high-risk groups. This data-driven model integrates basic, translational and clinical research to greatly enhance our understanding of this disease and to drive early detection and prevention methods. The consortium aims to identify high-risk individuals, create an effective early detection test for pancreatic cancer, understand the risk factors, including susceptible genes, and

develop a strategic pancreatic cancer prevention plan. As Dr. Donahue told us, “It is critical for high-risk individuals to join this important study in order to maximize identification and advance early detection of pancreatic cancer. Early detection would drastically change the trajectory of the disease and ultimately save thousands of lives.”

The Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases and UCLA’s involvement in this study will expand the population of high-risk individuals involved and allow family members of patients to participate in deepening our knowledge of pancreatic cancer risk factors. We are hopeful that this collaborative, multi-institution project will make early detection and prevention for pancreatic cancer accessible for all so that we may see a marked increase in survival rates.

An Overview of the Updates to the NCCN Guidelines for Pancreatic Cancer

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) works to improve cancer care through their vast collection of Guidelines for Patients. The latest version of the [Guidelines for Patients: Pancreatic Cancer](#), sponsored by the Hirshberg Foundation, provides information to help patients and their families navigate a pancreatic cancer diagnosis in an empowered and informed way.

The extensive guidelines include care options, treatment

protocols, quotes from patients, advice for how to discuss treatment with doctors, and much more. The Guidelines for Patients are based on the recommendations in the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology available to [physicians](#). One of the most recent updates included for patients is the addition of a new first-line therapeutic option, liposomal irinotecan + 5-FU + leucovorin + oxaliplatin (known as NALIRIFOX). This new drug regime has shown promise in early-stage trials conducted by [Dr. Zev Wainberg](#), a member of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, Professor of Medicine at UCLA and co-director of the UCLA GI Oncology Program.

Another highlight of the updated version is the recommendation that all individuals diagnosed with pancreatic cancer have genetic testing for a range of inherited mutations. The advice is to screen beyond just *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* to look at an array of mutations that can assist with treatment planning. There is also an expanded section on biomarker profiling for advanced and metastatic pancreatic cancer which can provide a molecular profile of small yet important features of the cancer. Biomarkers detect abnormal changes in cancer cells' genes that occurred during your lifetime and may also help with treatment planning.

An update that we are excited to focus on is the whole-body approach to treatment that is emphasized in the latest Patient Guidelines. The Hirshberg Foundation has long advocated for a holistic method of treatment that takes into consideration the [mind-body connection](#). The newest updates include details on [supportive care](#) that is recommended from the point of diagnosis. Treatment options have also taken on the best-practice of a more individualized approach based on individual and cancer specific characteristics.

The Hirshberg Foundation is proud to support this great work to

ensure that all patients and caregivers receive the most up-to-date information to assist them through their cancer journey. The NCCN Guidelines for Patients booklet is available for [digital download](#) or to purchase through [Amazon](#).

National Cancer Prevention Month: How to Create Your Personal Cancer Prevention Plan

As the Hirshberg Foundation funds invaluable [patient programs](#) and [research in prevention, early diagnosis, therapies and patient care](#), among these paths to eradicate pancreatic cancer, prevention is at the forefront. As shared by the CDC, [preventative care options](#) including blood tests, annual screenings, surveillance, and scans are all available for various cancers and diseases. The Hirshberg Foundation is eager to empower you and your loved ones with the tools you need to take control of your health and be proactive in your [cancer prevention plan](#). As National Cancer Prevention Month comes to a close, we encourage you and your loved ones, especially if you are at high risk, to use the resources we've provided to create a prevention plan that will allow you to thrive.

Begin your prevention journey by taking a personal inventory of your health. In 2021, the National Institutes for Health, discussed the importance of *Pancreatic cancer epidemiology: understanding the role of lifestyle and inherited risk factors*. [understanding the role of lifestyle and inherited risk factors](#).

Rethinking certain lifestyle choices, documenting your family history, and assessing your risk factors could help set a foundation for a healthier future. Tackling [modifiable risk factors](#) (smoking, obesity, diabetes and pancreatitis) are just that, *modifiable*. Making the decision to quit smoking, maintaining or losing weight, preventing type 2 diabetes or pancreatitis are significant steps. Speak with your doctor about how to begin addressing these important health issues.

Over time, we have found that some [communities are disproportionately affected](#) by pancreatic cancer while [genetics](#) play an important role for others. Both are at high-risk and raising awareness is only the first step in addressing the issue. Whether you are of [Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry](#) or have a family history of diabetes, pancreatitis, or pancreatic cancer, it's important that we address these diseases before they become life threatening. Progress continues to be made in the field of pancreatic cancer as diagnostic blood and [saliva tests](#) are in development, but our ultimate goal is to offer a cancer-free future. After 25 years of fighting this disease on many fronts and [sharing the facts](#), we remain confident that we are getting closer and closer to reaching this goal.

Learn [how you can support our efforts](#) and [make a donation](#) for cancer prevention today!

PANCREATIC CANCER PREVENTION RESOURCES

MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

- [Smoking](#)
- [Obesity, Nutrition and Exercise](#)
- [Stage-2 Diabetes](#)

- [High Risk Communities](#)
- [Risk Factors](#)

GENETIC COUNSELING & TESTING

- [Genetic Counseling](#)
- [Ashkenazi Jewish Ancestry](#)
- [BRCA1 & BRCA2 gene mutations](#)
- [Hereditary Pancreatitis](#)

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS

- Dr. Marcia Canto, Johns Hopkins: [Pancreatic Cancer Screening and Surveillance in High-Risk Individuals](#)
- Wendy Conlon, UCLA: [Why Should I See a Genetic Counselor?](#)
- Dr. Zhoaping Li, UCLA: [Nutrition & Pancreatic Cancer – Food Matters!](#)
- UCLA Center for Nutrition: [Boosting your Immune System](#)

National Cancer Prevention Month: Taking a Proactive Approach to Your Health

In recognition of National Cancer Prevention Month the Hirshberg Foundation is sharing important educational resources and steps you can take to live a healthier life. The goals of prevention are to help you and your loved ones remain cancer-free and to empower our community with the resources to keep you healthy. This month we will provide resources including a [prevention worksheet](#), share the facts about [risk factors](#), [genetics](#), and the

role of [nutrition and exercise](#) in your prevention plan. Pancreatic cancer prevention and awareness, especially for high-risk individuals, should be a priority for every family impacted by this disease. ***February 4th is also World Cancer Day, a reminder for all of us to raise awareness in our community, make an appointment for a cancer screening or genetic testing, and start a new healthy living plan.***

Your cancer prevention plan can become a year-round effort, however, as you start to check off your new year resolutions, this is the perfect time for a health check-in. Although pancreatic cancer remains the 3rd leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S., taking steps to improve your health today can reduce your risk of being diagnosed. The key components to pancreatic cancer prevention include:

Know the [inherited risk factors](#)

Specific communities are disproportionately at higher risk for pancreatic cancer, learn whether you are in one of these groups.

Avoid the modifiable [risk factors](#) (obesity and smoking)

Choosing a [nutritious diet](#), [reducing stress](#) and quitting habits including smoking and excessive drinking can extend your life.

Learn about [pancreatic cancer testing and surveillance](#)

Testing or surveillance may also be clinically recommended in instances such as a new diagnosis of a pancreas cyst or lesion.

Seek [genetic counseling](#)

Meeting with a genetic counselor can help you determine your level of risk and how to tackle challenges.

In addition to personal pre-emptive steps you can take in your everyday life, the Foundation's [Seed Grant Program](#) continues to fund critical research and with the aim of pancreatic cancer prevention as well as therapeutics, diagnosis, immunology, and

cancer biology. Thanks to these research projects, we are making strides forward everyday. Recently, the the 5-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer has increased to 12% putting it on an upward trajectory for the second year in a row. This news from the ACS (American Cancer Society) [Cancer Facts & Figures Report](#) gives survivors and families some additional hope as they navigate a diagnosis. We are headed in the right direction, but it is just as important that individual remain pro-active in our day-to-day lives.

Learn more about [how to support our efforts](#) and raise funds for cancer prevention.

[\[MAKE A DONATION\]](#)

Pancreatic Cancer Patient Support Groups

Living with pancreatic cancer can create an array of emotional and physical challenges. Fortunately, these new life difficulties can be greatly improved with the right support system in place. While family and friends can offer assistance there are many benefits to speaking with other pancreatic cancer patients and those with a shared experience. While not conventionally thought of as part of your medical team, support groups can provide a wealth of resources, tips and helpful information.

Participating in a support group online can make the difference between feeling alone and isolated versus feeling empowered and connected. Support groups can be beneficial for both the patient

and the caregivers as it provides a safe space to connect with people going through comparable medical and psychological experiences. Not all support groups operate the same; some gather virtually while others are online forums where patients post questions, so take the time to find one that feels right for you.

Below are some of our partners and organizations that understand the importance of support groups for both pancreatic cancer patients and their loved ones.

- American Cancer Society provides free support services for anyone living with cancer and their loved ones. Search for [support programs and services](#) in your area.
- [CancerCare](#) provides free, professional support services for people living with cancer. They offer [counseling](#) with an oncology social worker to help cope with the emotional and practical challenges of pancreatic cancer. They also provide free [online support groups](#) for both pancreatic cancer patient and caregivers.
- Cancer Support Community offers a [toll-free helpline and live web chat](#) where anyone affected by cancer can speak with licensed counselors. Through [MyLifeLine](#), you can create a private support webpage to stay connected with friends and family.
- WeSPARK offers an array of [free support groups](#), from a caregivers group to a singles support group as well as in-treatment and post-treatment groups. They also offer various supplemental programs such as acupuncture, reflexology and tai chi. They advise an [intake session](#) where they review your history to better recommend programs that may be a good fit.
- [Pancreatic Cancer Connections](#) is an online social community that provides a safe space for pancreatic cancer patients and their loved ones to share their

experiences, get valuable coping resources, and support one another.

- If you're comfortable with social media, there's a Facebook group called the [Whipple Surgery Survivor Group](#). With patients from around the world, this vast community can be the right resource for those looking to connect with other patients on Facebook. This group does require you to have a Facebook account and posts may not be private.
- The [Smart Patients Pancreatic Cancer](#) discussion forum is an online support group for patients and caregivers dealing with pancreatic cancer. Members share help, advice and information about treatments, symptoms and side effects.
- [Cancer Support Community South Bay](#) offers a free, virtual group for pancreatic cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, and family members to build and maintain a support community from diagnosis through treatment and recovery. (Available for California residents only)
- If you're looking to connect with other patients and caregivers, [ANCAN](#) offers a virtual peer-to-peer support group with the mission to provide all pancreatic cancer patients with a better quality of life.
- Another virtual peer-to-peer group is led by long-term survivor Tom. Tom facilitates a space for patient and caregivers to share experiences, knowledge and support. Zoom calls are every Friday from 9:00am until 10:30am PST, [contact Tom](#) for more details.

If you are a patient or caregiver with questions, contact [Patient & Family Support](#) today.

Welcoming New Symposium Sponsor, GRAIL!

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to welcome a new Symposium sponsor, GRAIL, LLC, a company at the leading edge of early detection. Welcoming leading medical professionals in the field of pancreatic cancer to our Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer allows our patients, caregivers and families to learn about critical and groundbreaking advances. GRAIL has joined the medical community's efforts to empower patients to detect cancer early with their Galleri® test. We are excited to share innovative advances that offer an opportunity to detect cancer earlier and save lives.

Galleri is a multi-cancer early detection (MCED) test; it detects signals found in DNA that cancer cells shed into the bloodstream. GRAIL's innovative testing with Galleri has detected 50 types of cancer through a simple blood draw. Galleri allowed Jim, who was featured in a [NBC nightly news story](#), to detect pancreatic cancer at Stage II. Testing and continued early detection research broadens our understanding of pancreatic cancer and brings us closer to the goal of regular cancer screenings.

The ultimate goal of early detection is to save lives as early as possible, screen people at-risk, and empower our communities with the necessary tools to achieve better outcomes. Advances in early detection not only impact the progression of disease, it can also decrease the financial burden many patients face. "Preventing cancer in the first place or detecting it early is the best way to reduce many costs associated with cancer treatment—patient out-of-pocket costs, health care payer costs, and indirect costs." shares the American Cancer Society, Cancer

Action Network.

As a Symposium sponsor, GRAIL representatives will be available to answer questions at the Symposium and discuss this technology one-on-one with patients and families in attendance.

What you should know:

- It can detect many cancers that are not commonly screened for today, to allow for earlier treatment.
- Today, 71% of cancer deaths are caused by cancers not commonly screened for.

Information about Galleri:

- Early cancer detection Testing with ease.
- Can be easily incorporated into a routine healthcare visit.
- Actionable results if a cancer signal is found, the results can point to where in the body the cancer is coming from with high accuracy to help your healthcare provider guide your next steps.

Important Galleri Safety Information

The Galleri test is recommended for use in adults with an elevated risk for cancer, such as those aged 50 or older. The Galleri test does not detect all cancers and should be used in addition to routine cancer screening tests recommended by a healthcare provider. Galleri is intended to detect cancer signals and predict where in the body the cancer signal is located. Use of Galleri is not recommended in individuals who are pregnant, 21 years old or younger, or undergoing active cancer treatment.

Results should be interpreted by a healthcare provider in the context of medical history, clinical signs and symptoms. A test

result of “Cancer Signal Not Detected” does not rule out cancer. A test result of “Cancer Signal Detected” requires confirmatory diagnostic evaluation by medically established procedures (e.g. imaging) to confirm cancer.

If cancer is not confirmed with further testing, it could mean that cancer is not present or testing was insufficient to detect cancer, including due to the cancer being located in a different part of the body. False-positive (a cancer signal detected when cancer is not present) and false-negative (a cancer signal not detected when cancer is present) test results do occur. Rx only. For more information about Galleri, visit www.galleri.com.