

# 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.

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

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# 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](http://www.galleri.com).

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## **New Podcast from Pancreatic Cancer Survivor Offers Hope**

Since her diagnosis with an inoperable pancreatic tumor in 2002, [Roberta Luna](#) has embarked on many new adventures. From her first half-marathon, to her first tattoo to her first of many sky diving trips, Roberta has embraced living life to its fullest. As she said, “we tend to put off doing things we want to... because we think there’s plenty of time down the road.” So when the opportunity to host a podcast radio show on OC Talk Radio presented itself, Roberta, along with her husband and caregiver, Vic, began yet another first.

“Vic and I recently had the opportunity to take another leap of faith and embark on a new journey with OC Talk Radio. We have created the podcast and radio show, [Living Hope; Your Journey](#)

[with Pancreatic Cancer.](#)”

Through their podcast, Roberta and Vic hope to provide information and [resources](#), share [inspirational stories](#), give hope to those affected by pancreatic cancer. With new episodes available on Thursdays, Roberta is not only sharing her story, but stories from across the pancreatic cancer community. As she shared, “through my experience with this horrific disease, I believe I am here to help those who have also been affected by pancreatic cancer, to hopefully inspire them and give them much needed hope.”

Roberta is a wife, mother, self-proclaimed thrill-seeker, tireless advocate and volunteer, and as of April 1, 2021, a 19-year pancreatic cancer survivor, with an inoperable tumor due to artery & vein involvement.

Vic and Roberta hope to share the journeys of various patients, caregivers and advocates, including the good, bad and ugly of facing this disease. They aim educate, raise awareness, provide hope and spark inspiration in their audience. Together, the pancreatic cancer community can weather the storm with the support of loved ones, family, “the purple family” and the many people encountered along this often-difficult journey. We are happy to support Roberta and Vic on their latest endeavor!

Learn more and listen to their show → <https://livinghopepc.com/>  
Follow along on their Facebook page → <https://www.facebook.com/LivingHope2055>

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# The Financial Costs of Cancer

Cancer can be a very expensive illness. Even those with excellent insurance can face an array of new costs associated with their treatment. From transportation to hospital stays, prescriptions to medical devices, daily living expenses to holistic care, there are a multitude of expenses to consider. Being organized and understanding your rights can give you a sense of control while helping prioritize.

Through our longstanding partnership with [Cancer Care](#), patients are able to apply for a one-time grant to help cover the costs associated with cancer treatment. Cancer Care also provides an array of [financial assistance resources](#) to help cancer patients and their families better cope with financial concerns.

Below are some of the resources Cancer Care offers to help manage the financial costs of cancer.

- [Managing The Cost of Cancer](#) booklet. This guide will help you navigate what is covered by health insurance and what is not, as well as tools to help handle the cost of cancer.
- [Tips for Managing the Cost of Cancer](#) is a great overview of things to consider as you begin navigating a cancer diagnosis.
- [Co-payment assistance](#) is a program to help cancer patients overcome the financial barriers to prescribed treatment through co-payment aid.
- [Understanding the Costs of Care and Your Health Care Coverage](#) is a workshop that addresses the medical and indirect costs of treatment, benefits and limitations to health care plans, as well as advanced health care directives, led by a panel of experts.
- In addition to finances, there are legal considerations

when facing cancer and Cancer Care offers [legal assistance](#) as well.

- [A Helping Hand](#) is a resource guide to help cancer patients and their families take control of their finances. This booklet can help you understand your options, know your rights and know where to turn for help. It will introduce issues to consider such as government assistance, nonprofit hospitals and community programs near you that may help defer some of the costs.

>We are here to help, contact [Patient Support](#) today to receive additional information and resources.

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## Clinical Trial Awareness

[Clinical trials](#) are a crucial tool for advancing medical knowledge and patients who participate can benefit from these new and emerging treatments. Understanding the clinical trial process and how to find a trial can empowers patients to make informed treatment choices from day one. Today, the NIH website lists more than [280 pancreatic cancer clinical trials](#) actively recruiting in the United States. Whether the trial is for adenocarcinoma (PDAC) or neuroendocrine tumors (NETs), the goal of a pancreatic cancer clinical trial is to improve patient outcomes and save lives.

## The Clinical Trial Process

The complex nature of pancreatic cancer requires attacking the disease from all directions. Clinical trial research is designed to analyze and question the benefits and risks of a promising



new treatment before it can be approved for patients. Emerging cancer treatments include, but are not limited to, new drugs, drug combinations, targeted therapy, immunotherapy, radiation and chemotherapy. Over the course of months or years, a promising pre-clinical study advances into a human clinical trial that builds from [phase I to phase IV](#). Trials are developed for all stages of pancreatic cancer and may recruit participants in phases I-IV. If each phase demonstrates success, the therapy is approved by the FDA and made available to public.

## Clearing Up Misconceptions

Experimental treatments developed in clinical trials can offer a lifeline for patients and families. That is why it is critical that patients' concerns and questions are addressed. One common misconception is that clinical trials are a last resort. New drugs and treatments can actually be beneficial early-on in a treatment plan rather than waiting until options are exhausted.

Another common roadblock for patients is an initial apprehension as to how safe a clinical trial is because of its experimental nature. Clinical trials have some risk, however, from start-to-finish specific practices are put in motion to ensure patient safety. Patients must give [informed consent](#) and researchers develop [clinical trial protocols](#), follow [FDA regulations](#), are monitored and scrutinized by an [Institutional Review Board](#) and [Data & Safety Monitoring Board](#). World-class scientists are committed to unlocking the answers to pancreatic cancer through clinical trials and accomplishing the task safely. <

Finally, it is important that the people who are eligible and will benefit from the research are represented in clinical trials. In 2018, an [FDA Clinical Trial Snapshot](#) disclosed that 48% of all adult clinical trials missed their target recruitment goal for minorities. Balanced representation can only be

achieved if patients, doctors and clinical trial recruiting processes share this goal.

## Finding a Clinical Trial

Clinical trials are helping to transform medicine, personalize treatment and expand our medical knowledge for generations to come. If you are interested in exploring a clinical trial, discuss this option with your oncologist or physician. The following resources can help you or a loved one find a clinical trial that is right for you.

We are here to help, contact [Patient Support](#) today to speak with our Patient & Family Coordinator.

- Hirshberg Foundation video [A-B-C's of Clinical Trials](#)
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) [clinical trial database](#)
- National Cancer Institute [\(NCI\) search tool](#)
- MassiveBio's [SYNERGY search platform](#)
- EmergingMed's [clinical trial navigator service](#)
- Let's Win PC video on [How to Find a Clinical Trial](#)
- UCLA [clinical trial search tool](#)

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## Paving the Way to Better Outcomes

The Hirshberg Foundation's pioneering research efforts in pancreatic cancer is driven by the countless families and faces in need of services and support everyday. When we evaluate the needs of our community from a scientific perspective or simply a

place of compassion, one thing is evident: one group is disproportionately affected by this disease. April, [National Minority Health Month](#), is an opportunity to continue a dialogue on how we can better support Black Americans at highest risk for pancreatic cancer.

Although Black Americans account for [13.4%](#) of the U.S., the third largest population, it is still a community facing the greatest obstacles to prevent, detect, treat and survive pancreatic cancer. [Risk factors from smoking, diabetes and weight](#) are difficult hurdles for many Americans. However, socioeconomic factors can also impact a pancreatic cancer diagnosis and the reality that many Black Americans [report racial discrimination](#) at health provider visits makes those hurdles even higher.

***Too often Black Americans are diagnosed at later stages, are underrepresented in clinical trials and even when pancreatic cancer is discovered early, patients are less likely to receive surgery than any other racial group in the U.S.***

We strive to improve outcomes for these fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, cousins and grandparents, generations of families at high risk for this disease. The community has a [20% higher incidence](#) of pancreatic cancer and faces a higher burden for overcoming chronic conditions that can lead to this disease. Communication and community are key to elevate awareness and reach families unaware of the risks. Talking about [risks & symptoms](#), sharing [patient & family resources](#) for medical interventions and [uniting](#) our community are some of the steps we can take together.

To prevent this disease from rooting itself deeper, we must remain dedicated to increasing awareness across the country and the globe; share research progress and current medical

treatments available; further diversify clinical trials through representation; educate patients and caregivers; and address the urgency for equity in the healthcare system.

The following are resources that could help save the lives of family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers in the Black American community:

- Hirshberg Foundation – [Patient & Family Educational Webinars](#)
- American Cancer Society – [Health Disparities Research](#)
- FDA – [Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Clinical Trials](#)
- National Institutes of Health – [Clinical Trial List](#)

The United States is comprised of a blend of unique ancestry, ethnicities and cultures diverse in every way. Our approach to healthcare, prevention and community outreach is not one-size-fits-all. We will continue to advocate for all families, patients and high-risk communities so no one fights pancreatic cancer alone.