

# Nutrition

People with pancreatic cancer often find it difficult to maintain their weight and follow a healthy diet. Proper nutrition is crucial to your care to help you feel better, stronger, and more energetic.

Working with a dietitian to optimize your health and avoid excess weight loss during treatment is essential. Poor nutrition decreases the body's ability to fight infection. A dietitian can help you choose foods that are easy to digest to maintain good nutrition, which is linked to better treatment outcomes.

Eating easy-to-digest, small, and frequent meals and focusing on high-protein foods is often recommended. Staying hydrated is also important, so consider having protein shakes and other liquid meals to maintain caloric intake.

## Nutrition after Surgery

After surgery, your healthcare team will monitor you for digestive issues or abnormal blood sugar levels. They will assist you in managing any changes that occur. If you are experiencing digestive issues, you might need to take a [supplement](#) to replace the natural digestive enzymes produced by the pancreas. Additionally, you might need to take mineral and vitamin supplements. In case of [high blood sugar levels](#), you may require medication to manage your condition.

For more nutritional guidance, we have a variety of presentations and information from our experts to support you in your recovery and help you live your best life. We are here to support you on your journey. Please reach out should you need more nutritional guidance.

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- [Pancreatic Enzyme Education](#)

UCLA's Shelby Yaceczko, an advanced practice registered dietitian, presented an overview of pancreatic enzyme education at the Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer

- [Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency \(EPI\) and Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy \(PERT\)](#)

Information on Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency (EPI) and how it can be treated with Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy (PERT)

- [Dietary Management Post-Diagnosis](#)

Shelby Yaceczko spoke on the importance of diet and wellness at every phase of the pancreatic cancer journey at the Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer

- [Nutritional Myths with Pancreatic Cancer](#)

At the Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer, UCLA's Dr. Zhaoping Li, Director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition, addresses the importance of nutrition for pancreatic cancer patients, from what to eat and what to avoid, how to modify eating habits post-Whipple, and more

- [Nutrition and Pancreatic Cancer – Food Matters!](#)

Dr. Zhaoping Li shares important tips on optimal nutrition for post-surgical patients and non-surgical patients

- [Optimal Nutrition](#)

Presenting at the Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer, Dr. Zhaoping Li discusses the role that food and diet play in achieving optimal health

- [Cooking Healthy With Dr. Li](#)

This hands-on cooking demonstration led by Dr. Zhaoping Li at Sur La Table allowed patients and caregivers to cook

delicious and nutritious food tailored to those with various pancreas disease concerns with recipes provided

- [Cook For Your Life](#)

Created by a cancer survivor, this great resource provides a library of nutritional recipes searchable by dietary concern geared specifically towards those in treatment and dealing with certain side effects

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## **Where to Begin: Guidelines for the Newly Diagnosed**

The Hirshberg Foundation is committed to supporting pancreatic cancer patients throughout their journey. We often hear from newly diagnosed patients and families navigating a new landscape of healthcare decisions and terminology. A pancreatic cancer diagnosis raises many questions, and we are here to provide answers. **The following guidelines are intended to assist all newly diagnosed patients and their families.**

### **LEARN ABOUT THE DISEASE**

We have worked with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) to create a booklet for pancreatic cancer patients and their families. It has a glossary of terms, treatment options, info on staging and more. You can purchase the paperback version on [Amazon](#) or download the [free digital version](#).

# KNOW WHAT TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Prepare for your doctor's appointments by knowing which questions to ask. Download and print our [list of questions](#) for your next visit. Consider bringing a support person to help and record the discussion for clarity. Your aim is to understand your diagnosis, treatment plan, multidisciplinary team, and make informed decisions about your health.

Watch [A Nurse's Guide to Pancreatic Cancer: From Diagnosis to Treatment](#) presented by two oncology nurses who offer helpful resources for understanding the treatment process and planning. Watch ['Navigating from Diagnosis to Treatment'](#), a presentation by Dr. Margaret Tempero, Director of the UCSF Pancreas Center, explaining what you need to know once diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

# CONSIDER CLINICAL TRIALS AND SECOND OPINIONS

Once you have been diagnosed, you should consider participating in a clinical trial and seeking a second opinion.

**Clinical Trials:** We have compiled a list of resources and search tools on [clinical trials](#). Early access to new treatments can lead to progress in research and better treatment options and outcomes for more patients.

**Second Opinions:** Seeking a [second opinion](#) is always recommended. New perspectives from doctors with expertise and experience ensures that all available treatment options have been offered and explained.

## CREATE YOUR TEAM

As you [create your healthcare team](#), you will want to ensure that certain specialists are included to help you throughout treatment.

[Registered Dietician](#): It's important to meet with a registered dietician familiar with pancreatic cancer to create a nutrition plan to keep your body as strong as possible before, during, and after treatment.

[Palliative Care Doctor](#): Palliative care is for people diagnosed with a serious illness. It provides relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of an illness like pancreatic cancer. The goal is to improve the quality of life for you and your family. It provides an extra layer of support with your oncologist and can be used with curative treatment.

[Psycho-Social Support Specialist](#): Studies have found a connection between social support, spiritual assistance, and more positive cancer outcomes. Patients are encouraged to ask their doctors about available resources within the cancer center to help them achieve a calmer and more peaceful state while navigating this challenging disease.

In addition to your oncologist, you will likely meet [other medical specialists](#) on your journey.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR GENETICS

[Genetic Testing & Counseling](#): Once you receive a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, your healthcare provider will order germline testing (inherited genes) and somatic testing (acquired mutations) of the tumor, using a sample. This will identify whether the cancer has mutations in specific genes and provide

valuable information to help steer treatment decisions.

[Surveillance & Screening](#): For those with particular risk factors, including family history and certain genetic syndromes that increase susceptibility to pancreas cancer, it may be appropriate to participate in a research screening program. Surveillance may also be clinically recommended in instances such as a new diagnosis of a pancreas cyst or lesion.

## KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE

We have a collection of videos featuring survivors and caregivers sharing their stories and perspectives. They offer great tips on how they coped and what helped them the most through treatment and beyond. Be inspired to hope. Watch the panel discussion [Perspectives from Survivors and Caregivers](#), the heartfelt and funny [Breaking Up with Pancreatic Cancer](#) and the inspirational [Conversation and Coaching with Pancreatic Cancer Survivors](#)

Should you or a loved one need support navigating a pancreatic cancer diagnosis, please [connect with our Director of Patient Programs](#), Amy Reiss. We are here for you, and there is hope.

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# The World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition Highlights the

# Hirshberg Foundation

*This spring, the World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition (WPCC) is shining a light on the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research. As a member of the WPCC, we celebrate and recognize that we are not alone in this fight. With over 100 member organizations from 40 countries, the coalition raises awareness, inspires action, and ultimately creates better outcomes for patients. Every organization in the WPCC brings something unique and remarkable to the table. As the pancreatic cancer foundation that pioneered these efforts, we are honored to share our history, mission, and ongoing projects.*

## **WORLD PANCREATIC CANCER COALITION MEMBER PROFILE**

In 1997, the Hirshberg Foundation was established to fund groundbreaking scientific research, provide patient education and support, and sustain the hope that this cancer will be eradicated once and for all. To date, the organization offers many programs focused on accelerating multidisciplinary pancreatic cancer research, providing comprehensive support services to patients, educating families, and raising community awareness.

## **WHERE WE STARTED**

Over twenty-five years ago, Agi Hirshberg set out on an extraordinary journey to lead the fight against pancreatic cancer in honor of her late husband, Ronnie. Determined to find answers, she made a promise that still holds true: she would be relentless in the fight against this disease, and she would never give up. Today, the Foundation she started remains at the

forefront of pancreatic cancer research and is a beacon of hope for patients and families facing this disease.

The Hirshberg Foundation's research efforts launched with the opening of the Ronald S. Hirshberg Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratory at UCLA and the Foundation's world-renowned Seed Grant Program. The Seed Grant Program provides early funding for researchers, opening the door for investigators to secure additional support to advance their work. To date, over 120 individual and collaborative Hirshberg Seed Grants have been funded at more than 45 research institutions in the US and abroad.

Under Agi's direction, the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board and an ever-growing community of doctors and scientists have been instrumental in elevating patient care, leading research globally, and increasing awareness in the medical community. In 2005, the Foundation funded the UCLA Pancreas Tissue Bank, sharing specimens to aid the basic, translational, and clinical research activities of investigators. That same year, the first Symposium for Pancreatic Cancer was presented to the pancreatic cancer community, providing critical information and updates on treatment, research, and topics including nutrition, genetics, surveillance, and more to patients, caregivers, the research and the medical community.

To date, the Hirshberg Foundation's patient programs include one-on-one support, patient-focused events, educational resources and webinars, financial aid for low-income households, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Guidelines, and the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases at UCLA. Patients and families are at the heart of the Foundation's mission, and each of these resources empowers them as they navigate a diagnosis with the support they need.



Thanks to the partnership, guidance, and brilliance of doctors and investigators from every corner of the globe, significant strides have been made in both research and patient care. Today, the Foundation remains focused on finding a cure for pancreatic cancer and empowering patients and families whose lives have been touched by this disease. Advances being made are not only offering families hope, they're giving patients a fighting chance.

## **WHO WE ARE AT OUR CORE**

When the Foundation was established, it was organized around Agi's vision and five mission pillars. To date, the Foundation has accomplished 4 of those 5 goals, with a cure being the final piece of the puzzle. The hard-fought battles of our patients, families, researchers, and medical community have brought us closer than ever to a cancer-free life, and the Foundation remains committed to our mission and our mantra to Never Give Up!

[Read our mission pillars](#)

## **Ongoing Projects**

### **Seed Grant Program**

Each year, the Foundation Seed Grant program provides research funding to innovative projects led by basic and clinical investigators. To date, over 120 research projects have been funded at 45 medical and research institutions in the United States and overseas, many of which have gone on to receive NIH support. The program funds research in treatment/therapy,

patient care, early diagnosis, detection, cancer biology, basic science, prevention/metabolism, and research core facilities. It is allocated annually- submissions pouring in from locations around the world, with a notable emphasis on collaborative initiatives involving multiple research institutions.

[Learn more about the Seed Grant Program](#)

## **Symposium for Patients & Families**

The 18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer returns to the Luskin Center on April 13th with a host of new topics and guest speakers. This invaluable event is provided free of charge and brings together patients, caregivers, medical professionals, and scientific researchers. This year's Symposium will cover topics from genetics to enzymes, the Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Consortium, and the Canopy Cancer Collective. The highlight of this event includes a patient and caregiver panel sharing personal experiences, unique perspectives, and inspiration with survivors and caregivers. Guests may attend in person or online, with videos made available later for viewing.

[Learn more about the Symposium](#)

## **Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases**

The Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Disease continues to set the standard for state-of-the-art care as it grows and thrives. The Center has made tremendous progress, assembling an ever-growing arsenal of tools to understand and mitigate the effects of the illness and advance its quest for greater patient comfort. Now, under the direction of Dr. Timothy Donahue, the Center recently opened in a new larger space at UCLA where

patients can receive top-notch care from their entire medical team. Patients are able to meet with surgeons, medical oncologists, gastroenterologists, palliative care specialists, dietitians, genetic counselors, clinical trials coordinators, and therapists from the Simms-Mann psychosocial care team – all in one location and often in one visit.

[Learn more about the Center](#)

## **UCLA Partnership**

The longstanding partnership between the Hirshberg Foundation and UCLA plays a crucial role in advancing research and improving patient outcomes. The Foundation funds laboratories, core research facilities, and the Pancreas Tissue Bank. The relationship extends to psychosocial care from the Simms/ Mann Center for Integrative Oncology as well. As a member of the Canopy Collective, our UCLA team is making great strides in nutrition, palliative care, genetic testing, clinical trial participation, and patient education. The clinical trial portfolio of the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases is also among the strongest in the country. Trials have robust patient enrollment, with collaboration across multidisciplinary teams.

[Learn more about our UCLA partnership](#)

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## **Tour de Pier – What Your Ride**

# Funds

Each year, thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Tour de Pier community, our three cancer charities are able to provide crucial support for patients and fund groundbreaking research. As we gear up for an epic 2024 ride, we want to look back at 2023 and highlight the progress each charity was able to make because of your fundraising and generosity. We can't wait to see what we can accomplish together in 2024!

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## The Hirshberg Foundation

In 2023, the Hirshberg Foundation was able to fund 8 new individual & collaborative [Seed Grants](#), collectively awarding 120 projects to date. The Seed Grant program continues to produce results and past Seed Grant recipients presented at conferences around the globe in 2023. As a long-time sponsor of the American Pancreatic Association (APA) Meeting, their 2023 opening symposium addressed the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in diagnosing, treating and advancing pancreatic cancer research. At the end of last year, the [Agi Hirshberg UCLA Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#) moved to a beautiful new space on the UCLA campus that offers patients and loved ones world-class integrative care in one convenient location.

Through direct patient interactions, in 2023 the Hirshberg Foundation provided invaluable support services to over 200 newly diagnosed patients and their families. Their [Patient & Family Webinars](#) and Symposium videos help pancreatic cancer patients & caregivers learn from top medical professionals, share their stories and connect with one another. The Hirshberg Foundation is proud to partner with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) to develop extensive guidelines on care options, treatment protocols, and expert recommendations, all made available in their latest [Guidelines](#) book.

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We've got brain cancer surrounded.

## The Uncle Kory Foundation

In 2023, the [Uncle Kory Foundation](#) (UKF) funded \$200,000 to their brain cancer Seed Grant Program, \$150,000 in Collaborative Grants and \$100,000 in second year Renewal Seed Grants. They also contributed \$100,000 to a program that is near and dear to the Tour de Pier community and the South Bay, the [Fight Like the Averys Grant](#) (FLAG) which supports pediatric brain cancer research programs. UKF was also able to provide \$10,000 in [Medical Student Grants](#) at UCLA and Duke University.

Thanks to the support from the Tour de Pier, as of January 2024, UKF has awarded \$3,650,000 in grants to 61 projects focused on finding better treatments for adult and pediatric brain cancer.

UKF research grants have led to over \$2.2 million in additional funding from the National Institute of Health and other funding opportunities. Together, we have brain cancer surrounded.

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## **Cancer Support Community Redondo Beach**

CSC South Bay provides hope, education, and support to cancer patients, survivors, and their loved ones completely free of charge. CSC South Bay offers [200 programs](#) per month (both in-person and virtually) which include support groups led by licensed mental health professionals, healthy lifestyle classes, educational workshops, counseling, and Kids Community programs.

In 2023, thanks in part to the support from the Tour de Pier, CSC South Bay served 1,950 individuals through 755 support groups. Their 572 Healthy Lifestyle Classes include restorative yoga, Tai Chi, meditation, sound bowl healing, and walking groups to provide healing and emotional wellness. 130 educational workshops covered topics from nutrition to relaxation techniques to caregiver support. They provided 464 no-cost counseling sessions and 2023 saw an expansion to 364 new participants and an 80% increase in Kids Community attendance. CSC South Bay was recognized for their great work with the 2023 Daily Breeze Award for the Southbay's Best Nonprofit Organization.

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It is thanks to you that our three charities have been able to continue their important work. Our research and patient programs are made possible because of your participation, fundraising and generosity. We look forward to seeing you at the 2024 Tour de Pier – let's continue to make a difference for our cancer community!

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Jenny Tran, PhD to lead the Panel Discussion: Perspectives from Survivors and Caregivers**

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to announce Jenny Tran, PhD will be joining us at the 18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to moderate the uplifting and informative panel discussion portion of our event.

We are honored, each year, to share the stories of pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers. These honest and personal discussions give us all perspective, insight, and sensitivity to the journey of both patients and loved ones once someone in the family is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Dr. Jenny Tran will join us for another consecutive year as our panel moderator to facilitate a meaningful discussion featuring two patients and two caregivers impacted by pancreatic cancer. Attendees will have the honor of hearing personal stories,

perspectives, and insights from survivors. They will answer questions about how they navigated their diagnosis, what they wished they knew then, and what they want you to know now.

Dr. Jenny Tran is currently a Licensed Psychologist at Simms Mann UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology. She provides clinical care for patients and family members touched by cancer, centered around the emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual impacts of cancer.

Dr. Tran balances an integration of evidence-based interventions to strengthen coping skills and improve management of cancer-related distress, with a culturally informed, human-centered approach to support processing of themes that come up in one's unique illness experience. She offers cancer-focused individual counseling, caregiver support, family consultation, and assessment, in addition to interdisciplinary collaboration with medical providers. Additionally, Dr. Tran is involved in program development of services at the Simms Mann Center, including a monthly online orientation for patients coping with an Advanced GI Cancer to learn about Supportive Care Services recommended throughout their cancer care. She recently created an integrative health workshop sponsored by Roots and Wings for the Chinese community of patients in the San Gabriel Valley coping with metastatic breast cancer, which included topics presented by a multidisciplinary speaker panel on symptom management, survivorship nutrition, and cancer-related anxiety.

Dr. Tran earned both her master's degree and PhD in Clinical Psychology with an emphasis in Health Psychology at California School of Professional Psychology with Alliant International University in Los Angeles. Her personal experience as a caregiver for her late father influenced the pursuit of her doctoral dissertation which explored how cultural values and coping styles impact the quality of life in family caregivers of



older adults living with a chronic illness. She completed her full-time APA-accredited internship at VA St. Louis Health Care System and returned to the Simms Mann UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology to complete a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in Psycho-Oncology.

Her clinical experience includes treatment of OCD and anxiety-related disorders; administration of cognitive assessments for older adults; provision of individual and group support for veterans around adjustment to chronic illness, injury, and disability, health promotion and disease prevention; and counseling for patients and loved ones touched by cancer through the trajectory of care.

We are eager to have Jenny Tran, PhD joining us to moderate the **Panel Discussion: Perspectives from Survivors and Caregivers** at the 18th Annual Symposium.

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Shelby Yaceczko, MS, RDN-AP, CNSC, CSSD to discuss Pancreatic Enzyme Education**

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to announce Shelby Yaceczko, MS, RDN-AP, CNSC, CSSD will be joining us at the 18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss pancreatic enzyme education.

This presentation will review what pancreatic enzyme replacement

therapy (PERT) is, when it's needed, how to take the medication, and common misconceptions around PERT. We will additionally review diet patterns for pancreatic cancer and how they may impact your pancreatic enzyme dosing regimen.

Shelby Yaceczko is an advanced practice registered dietitian who specializes in complex gastrointestinal conditions. She leads the [Nutrition for Safer Surgeries](#) program and supports the Division of Digestive Diseases and Surgical Oncology patient population at UCLA Health. She is a valued team member of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases where she spends most of her time helping patients with pancreatic cancer improve their nutritional status and overall wellbeing during their cancer journey.

We are excited to welcome back Shelby Yaceczko, MS, RDN-AP, CNSC, CSSD to our Symposium to present **Pancreatic Enzyme Education** at the 18th Annual Symposium.