What is the pancreas?

- It's an organ about 6 inches long, deep in the abdomen between the stomach and the spine.
- It has both endocrine and exocrine functions - meaning it secretes proteins into the bloodstream and into other tissues.
- It releases digestive juices, also known as digestive or pancreatic enzymes into the small intestine through its exocrine function.
- The endocrine function consists of islet cells that produce the blood sugar-regulating hormones insulin (to lower blood sugar) and glucagon (to raise blood sugar) that are secreted into the bloodstream.

Pancreatic Cancer Facts:

- Cancer begins in cells and the tissues of the pancreas and other organs.
- There are two main types of pancreatic cancer:
  1) Pancreatic adenocarcinoma (PDAC), which is a tumor formed in the exocrine cells of the pancreatic ducts. PDAC accounts for 90% of pancreatic cancer.
  2) The remaining pancreatic tumors form in the endocrine cells, also known as neuroendocrine or islet cell tumors.
- Pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. It is currently the 3rd leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States after lung and colon.
- In 2021 an estimated 60,430 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the U.S., and more than 48,220 will die from the disease.
- For all stages combined, the 5-year relative survival rate is 10%.