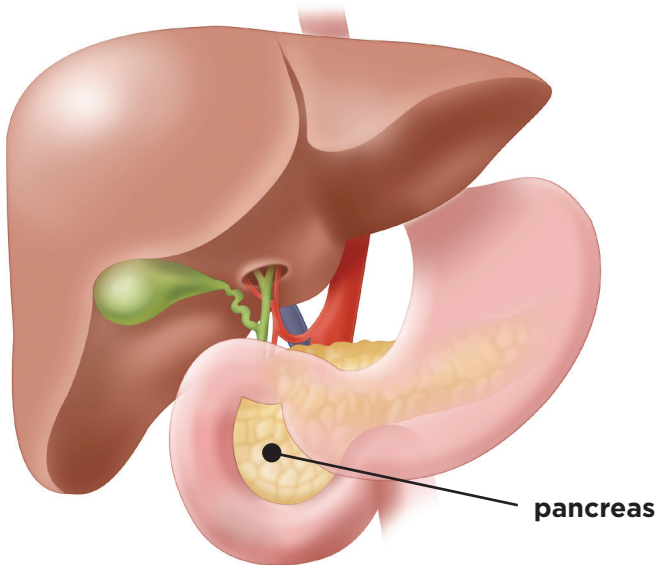




# THE PANCREAS AND PANCREATIC CANCER FACTS

## 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:

- More than 92% of pancreatic cancer cases are pancreatic adenocarcinoma (PDAC). These tumors develop in the exocrine tissue of the pancreas, which makes digestive enzymes.
- The less common pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors (NETs), develop in hormone-producing endocrine cells, or islet cells. Neuroendocrine tumors often have a better prognosis and younger median age of diagnosis.
- 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 2024 an estimated 66,440 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the U.S., and more than 51,750 will die from the disease.
- For all stages combined, the 5-year relative survival rate is 13%.

### Sources:

American Cancer Society: Cancer Facts & Figures  
Additional pancreas information from Columbia University

Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Foundation  
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