Pancreatic Cancer Symptoms

Pancreatic cancer is sometimes called a “silent cancer” because the early symptoms are often vague and unrecognised.

It is only with the development of more specific symptoms that patients and doctors consider pancreatic cancer to be a possibility - by which time it is often too late for potentially curative surgery to be an option.

Classical symptoms include:

- Painless jaundice (yellow skin/eyes, dark urine) related to bile duct obstruction
- Significant and unexplained weight loss;
- New onset of significant & persistent abdominal pain;

Other common symptoms:

- pain in the upper abdomen that typically radiates to the back and is relieved by leaning forward (seen in carcinoma in the body or tail of the pancreas);
- vague dyspepsia or abdominal discomfort;
- loss of appetite, or nausea and vomiting;
- pain when eating;
- steatorrhoea (fatty stools that are often pale and smelly);
- New onset diabetes

All of these symptoms can have multiple other causes, and there is not yet a reliable and easy diagnostic screening test for pancreatic cancer.

If you regularly experience any of these symptoms, which are not normal for you, contact your GP