


# Symptoms Diary



We save lives through early diagnosis

 [pancreaticcanceraction.org](https://www.pancreaticcanceraction.org)

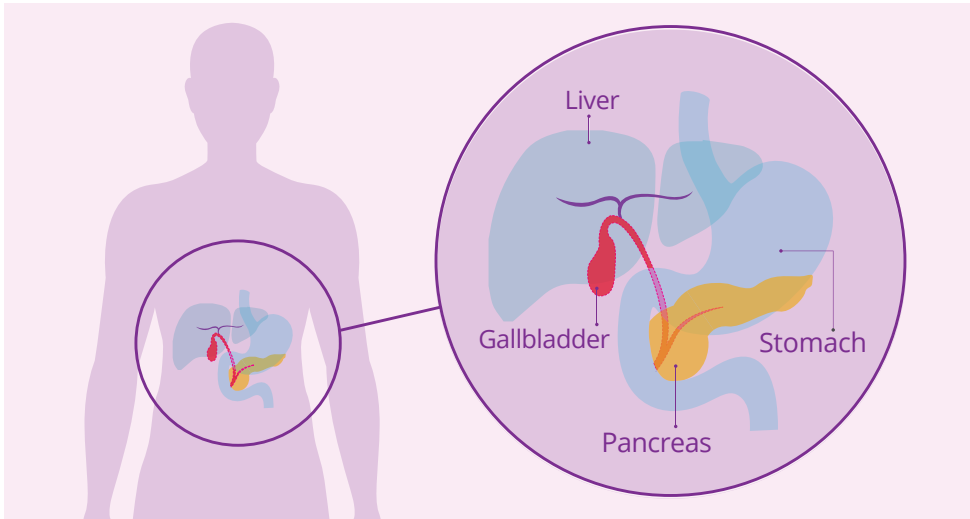
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### What is the pancreas?

The pancreas is an organ about 6 inches long and shaped like a thin pear lying on its side. The pancreas is found deep inside your body, behind the stomach and in front of the spine. Its function is to help digest (break down) the food you eat and to produce hormones such as insulin to control your blood sugar levels.

### What is pancreatic cancer?

Pancreatic cancer occurs when a malignant (cancerous) tumour forms in the pancreas. There are many different types of pancreatic cancer, but the vast majority are called adenocarcinomas. These tumours come from the cells in the pancreas which aid in digesting food.

### What is this diary for?

You may have searched for this diary yourself, after becoming worried about symptoms you have been having. Or you may have been given this symptom diary by your GP if you

are showing some of the signs and symptoms of pancreatic cancer. You can use this diary to keep a record of your symptoms. The notes at the back can be used for any other symptoms, thoughts or feelings you want to share with your doctor. It can also help you to plan what you want to talk about at your next appointment with your GP.

Recording your symptoms over the period of a few weeks, or longer, will help your doctor to understand what symptoms you are having, when they affect you and how severe you are finding them. **Even if you are having many of the symptoms listed here, it is unlikely that you have pancreatic cancer.**

Recording what is happening using this diary will help your doctor to decide what tests to order, what your diagnosis may be and how to treat you. The common symptoms of pancreatic cancer are listed in the following pages, but it is important that you record all of your symptoms to make sure your diagnosis is accurate.

# What are the symptoms of pancreatic cancer?

The symptoms listed below are some of the main signs and symptoms of pancreatic cancer. If you have persistent symptoms that are not normal for you, then you should visit your GP to investigate what's going on.



## Upper abdominal pain or discomfort

Which may radiate to the back.



## Jaundice

Yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes, and/or very itchy skin.



## Diabetes

Which has developed recently and is not linked to weight gain.



## Unexplained weight loss

Without trying.



## Mid-back pain or discomfort

Where a bra strap would sit and may be eased by leaning forward.



## Indigestion

Not responding to medication.



## Changes in the way you poo



## Nausea and vomiting

Feeling and being sick.



## Loss of appetite

Not feeling like eating.



## Fatigue

Feeling tired or exhausted all the time.

Some people say they feel bloated, are flatulent (passing gas), passing dark coloured urine or simply feel different in some way and not their normal selves. These symptoms could be the result of many different conditions.

# How to use this symptoms diary

Using a symptoms diary can help you to make a note of and track your symptoms to see how frequent and severe they are. You can take this information to your GP to help explain your symptoms.

## Using the diary

- Monitor your symptoms daily by making a record of when you have them and how severe you think they are; we suggest rating symptoms out of 10.
- You may want to note any comments or concerns to raise with your doctor as well as any other symptoms you have, this may aid your diagnosis.
- Use the medication section to note whether any medications your doctor has prescribed for your symptoms were taken and whether they are working. Include any over the counter medication you have taken i.e. paracetamol or Gaviscon®.
- It may help to keep the diary in your bag or beside your bed to make sure you remember to fill it in and make it part of your routine. Recording your symptoms as you are having them means that your diary is more likely to be accurate, and you are less likely to forget something.
- Keep a record for at least two weeks.

**But if your symptoms get worse, see your doctor straight away**

- Make an appointment to see your GP and use your diary to describe your symptoms in as much detail as possible.
- If your symptoms continue despite treatments or become more severe, tell your doctor you are concerned about pancreatic cancer.
- It is also important to tell your doctor if anyone in your family has had pancreatic cancer.
- Make sure you record all of your symptoms, not just the ones listed here. Most people with these symptoms do not have pancreatic cancer and it is important that you can give your doctor the most accurate information possible.

**If you have a combination of symptoms, particularly new onset diabetes, weight loss, or jaundice with any other symptom you should see your GP and explain you are concerned about pancreatic cancer.**

Date	Tummy pain	Back pain	Indigestion	Nausea and/or vomiting	Change in bowel habit	Fatigue

Poor appetite	Other	Medication taken?	Medication worked?

Date	Tummy pain	Back pain	Indigestion	Nausea and/or vomiting	Change in bowel habit	Fatigue



Poor appetite	Other	Medication taken?	Medication worked?



# Notes

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For more information on  
pancreatic cancer and its symptoms  
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