

Pancreatic Cancer

Your pancreas plays an important role in digestion and releases hormones that regulate your blood sugar. It also plays a role in supporting other organs like your heart, liver, and kidneys. Your pancreas is a large, tadpole-shaped gland situated deep in your belly. Pancreatic disease can be hard to diagnose due to the location of the organ. But there are things you can do to reduce your risk for these conditions.

Pancreatic cancer has become the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths. While the risk of lung cancer, colon cancer, and breast cancer is going down, the rates for pancreatic cancer are going up. You can see melanoma, and you can feel a lump in the breast, which gives you a chance to identify cancer early and have more treatment options. The area that people need to think about and worry about first is obesity. Early adulthood obesity is a problem, and it is a known risk factor for pancreatic cancer as well as other cancer hormones that cover up the pancreas. This is of concern for African Americans who especially are at risk due to the population being 50 to 90% higher in developing pancreatic cancer than any other racial group. We actually don't know why it's a combination of genetic factors and environmental factors, but it's a very alarming and prevalent disease for African Americans. People who might have pancreatic cancer or are at risk for diabetes is both a risk factor and also may have symptoms of pancreatic cancer. However, you can have long-standing diabetes and develop pancreatic cancer, but what's remarkably interesting is getting diabetes later in life can actually be a symptom that one out of 125 late onset diabetics will develop pancreatic cancer within three years.

People who fall into one of these danger zones, it's really important to correct things that you can correct such as obesity, watch your weight, eat well, exercise and make sure that your plate contains 2 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables a day.

From the St. Mark Health and Wellness Ministry