

Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer (mPaC)

What is the pancreas?

The **pancreas** is an organ located behind the stomach, which produces enzymes (proteins that help with digestion) and hormones (our body's chemical 'messengers').¹ Importantly, the pancreas creates insulin and glucagon, two hormones that regulate glucose levels, your body's main source of energy.²

What is pancreatic cancer?

Pancreatic cancer is a type of gastrointestinal (GI) cancer that forms in specific cells in the pancreas.¹

What is mPaC?

mPaC, also known as **advanced, stage IV** or **secondary** pancreatic cancer, is a cancer that began in the pancreas and has now spread to other parts of the body.³ mPaC typically spreads to the liver, tissue lining of the bowels or abdomen (where your organs are contained), lungs or bones.⁴

What are the possible symptoms of mPaC?

Symptoms of mPaC will vary for each person, and you may get different symptoms at different periods or depending on where in your body it has spread to. Common mPaC symptoms can include:^{1,5}

feeling tired and generally unwell

diabetes (known as type 3c diabetes)

a build up of fluid in your tummy area

yellowing of eyes and skin (called jaundice)

feeling and being sick

weight loss

diarrhea or constipation

tummy pain or bloating.

Speak to your health care team if you notice these symptoms persisting or they are concerning you.

For more details on your metastatic GI cancer journey, including information on the emotional side of cancer, your health care team, living with a metastatic GI cancer, the role of patient organizations and peer support, and planning your future, please see the MyJourney patient brochure.

For further information on symptoms, treatment, and side effects, consult the ESMO Cancer Guide for mPaC patients
<https://www.esmo.org/content/download/6625/115171/1/EN-Pancreatic-Cancer-Guide-for-Patients.pdf>

1. ESMO. Pancreatic cancer: An ESMO guide for patients. 2019. Available at: <https://www.esmo.org/for-patients/patient-guides/pancreatic-cancer> [Last accessed March 2022]
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4. Cancer Research UK. What is advanced pancreatic cancer? 2019. Available at: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/pancreatic-cancer/advanced-cancer/about> [Last accessed March 2022]
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6. Von Hoff DD, Ervin T, Arena FP, et al. Increased survival in pancreatic cancer with nab-paclitaxel plus gemcitabine. *N Engl J Med.* 2013;369:1691-1703. Available at: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmoa1304369> [Last accessed March 2022]

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Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer (mPaC) – symptoms and treatment

MyJourney Program



How will my mPaC symptoms be managed?

Symptoms of mPaC can be challenging, but your health care team will offer support and treatment to help you feel more comfortable. As well as medication for pain and sickness, your health care team will manage more specific mPaC symptoms.²



You may receive **pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy** – tablets which replace lost enzymes and help you break down your food.



If you have diabetes, a diabetes specialist may recommend dietary changes or treatment such as tablets or insulin injections.



mPaC may cause a blockage in your bile duct, a series of tubes that transport fluid that is important for digestion. A **stent** (a small tube which opens the blockage) may be fitted to improve this.

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What treatments are available for mPaC?

Every patient is different and treatment options will need to be discussed with a **range of health care professionals (HCPs) as part of a multidisciplinary team, sometimes known as a tumor board**. At this stage, treatment will not cure your cancer; instead, it will aim to **control the growth of your cancer, manage any of your symptoms, and maintain quality of life**.³

mPaC **cannot be surgically removed** – you may hear HCPs call your cancer inoperable or unresectable.^{1,3} If you have mPaC and are well enough, you may be able to have **chemotherapy** – a type of treatment that shrinks or slows down the growth of your tumor.³

If you are too unwell to have chemotherapy, or choose not to, you will **receive palliative care**, which aims to manage your symptoms and improve how you feel (see page 46 in the MyJourney patient brochure for details on palliative care).

Other treatments may also be available to you through **clinical trials** (see page 20 in the MyJourney patient brochure for details on clinical trials).

You may also wish to seek a **second medical opinion**, depending upon your circumstances and considering the positives and benefits (see page 19 in the MyJourney patient brochure for more details).

What are the possible side effects of chemotherapy for mPaC?

The side effects of chemotherapy will **depend up on the type of medication and the dose** used. Common side effects can include:³



fatigue



feeling and being sick



losing your hair



loose bowel movements



tingling or numbness in fingers and toes



blood clots



loss of appetite, taste changes or a sore mouth.

It is likely that you will get some of the side effects listed above, but you are very unlikely to have them all. Most are temporary and can be managed by medicine or lifestyle changes. **Speak to your health care team as soon as you notice** any side effects and they will support you.

What is my outlook with an mPaC diagnosis?

Outlook, or **prognosis**, will vary for each person with mPaC and depends on many things. On average, around 30% of people with mPaC will survive their cancer for 1 year or more after diagnosis.⁶ However, this is an average, and your doctor will be able to give you an approximate idea of what to expect.

You may also not wish to know your outlook; instead, you may **want only your loved ones to know your outlook** or only **how your symptoms may change over time**.