

Section Seven: Living well with pancreatic cancer

Tekiona Whitu

Te noho ora me te
matepukupuku
repetaiaki huka



Key points:

- Finding ways to focus positively on your body – such as by eating well, starting a new exercise programme like yoga, and making positive lifestyle changes – can help you live well with pancreatic cancer.
- Keeping active will help you to maintain a healthy weight and can reduce stress and tiredness. It will also help to keep your bones strong and your heart healthy.
- If you are unable to work for a period of time because of the effects of pancreatic cancer, you and/or your carer may be entitled to receive income support from the Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income.
- It is also a good idea to check your personal insurance policies, as you may qualify for an early payment. Speak to your insurance agent to find out if you are covered.
- A counsellor can help you to talk about your thoughts and feelings after a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

- Hospitals throughout Aotearoa New Zealand have trained health workers available to support your spiritual, cultural, and advocacy needs.
- Talk to your GP or whānau doctor, or contact your local Cancer Society, about the support services available for you and your whānau.

Ngā kōrero matua:

- Mā te rapu huarahi ki te arotau pai ki tō tinana - pērā ki te kai tika, te whai hōtaka korikori hou pērā ki te yoga, me te mahi panoni ki tō āhua noho - e āwhina i a koe ki te noho ora me te matepukupuku repetaiaki huka.
- Mā te noho kakama tonu e āwhina i a koe ki te mau tonu ki tō taumaha, me tana whakaiti ake i te ahotea me te hiāmoe. Ka āwhina hoki kia noho kaha tonu o kōiwi, kia pakari hoki tō manawa.
- Mehemea kīhai koe e kaha ki te mahi mō tētahi wā, nā runga i nga papātanga o te matepukupuku repetaiaki huka, ka āhei koe me tō kaitiaki hoki, ki te whiwhi tautoko mai i te Manatū Whakahiaito Ora - Te Hiranga Tamariki.
- He whakaaro pai ki te arowhai i ō kaupapa inihua whaiaro, i te mea tērā pea ka āhei koe ki ētahi utu moata. Kōrero ki tō māngai inihua ki te rapu mehemea kai te pai tō inihua.
- Tērā pea ka āwhina tētahi Kaitautāwhi i a koe ki te kōrero mō ū whakaaro, ū kare-ā-roto whai muri i tētahi whakatau mate mō te matepukupuku repetaiaki huka.
- Kai ngā hōhipera huri noa i te motu ngā kaimahi hauora kua whakangungutia, hei tautoko i ū hiahia ā-wairua, ā-ahurei, me ū hiahiatanga whaitaua.
- Kōrero ki tō GP, ki tō rata whānau rānei, me whakapā atu rānei ki ngā ratonga tautoko e wātea ana ki a koe me tō whānau.

Adjusting to change

Finding ways to focus positively on your body – such as by eating well, starting a new exercise programme like yoga, and making positive lifestyle changes – can help you live well with pancreatic cancer.

Keeping active will help you to maintain a healthy weight and can reduce stress and tiredness. It will also help to keep your bones strong and your heart healthy.



You can find more information on living well with cancer on our website: www.cancer.org.nz/living-with-cancer

Financial and legal support

Financial support – benefits and entitlements

If you are unable to work for a period of time because of the effects of pancreatic cancer, you and/or your carer may be entitled to receive income support from the Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income.

Depending on your situation, financial help may be available. Talk to a social worker, Work and Income, or Senior Services if you are 65 and over, to find out about the types of support you may be able to receive.



You can find more information on returning to work on financial support on our website: www.cancer.org.nz/supporting-you/financial-impacts-of-cancer/financial-assistance-and-benefits



The Cancer Society has partnered with Sorted to produce a life guide to help you navigate finances during a difficult time. The guide is available here: <https://sorted.org.nz/seriousdiagnosis>

Talking to your bank

If you have a mortgage or other financial commitments, talk to your bank as soon as possible about how they can support you if you are unable to work for a period of time.



You can find more information on these websites.

- Applying for KiwiSaver hardship withdrawal:
<https://sorted.org.nz/must-reads/applying-for-kiwisaver-hardship>
- Our information sheet Benefits and entitlements: available at
www.cancer.org.nz/assets/Downloads/Info-sheet-applying-to-work-and-income.pdf

Personal insurance benefits

It is also a good idea to check your personal insurance policies, as you may be eligible for an early payment. Speak to your insurance agent to find out if you are covered.

Power of attorney

A power of attorney is a legal document giving one person the power to act for another person. There are two types of power of attorney.

- An Ordinary Power of Attorney
- An Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)

It is a good idea to have your advance care planning (see page 35) done before you choose who you will give your powers of attorney to. A person cannot act on your behalf if they do not know what your wishes are. The person (or people) you choose should be someone you trust, a member of your whānau, or a friend.

Ordinary Power of Attorney	Enduring Power of Attorney
This is used when you are still able to manage your own affairs	There are two types of EPA. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property• Personal care and welfare You must set them up while you are able to manage your own affairs.
The person you choose to act on your behalf has the power to act on specific issues only (such as managing your bank account while you are overseas).	Property - authority can start immediately. You can nominate more than one person to manage your property.
You can have one or more people acting in your behalf.	Personal care and welfare - the person you nominate can only act on your behalf when you



You can find more information on these websites.

- Community Law: www.communitylaw.org.nz
- Citizens Advice Bureau: www.cab.org.nz/article/KB00001276

Finding support

For some people, meeting others who are in similar situations can help to decrease feelings of anxiety, isolation, or fear. Support groups and online forums offer you the opportunity to share your experiences and learn different ways of dealing with problems.



The Cancer Society offers support groups that you may find helpful. You can phone the Cancer Information Helpline (0800 CANCER 226 237) for further information.

Counselling

A counsellor can help you to talk about your thoughts and feelings after a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. Counselling can be very useful to help you and your whānau understand feelings and develop coping strategies. To find a counsellor, talk to your GP or whānau doctor, your local Cancer Society, or your treatment team.



You can find more information on counselling on our website: www.cancer.org.nz/emotions-and-cancer

Cultural and spiritual support

Hospitals throughout Aotearoa New Zealand have trained health workers available to support your spiritual, cultural, and advocacy needs. They may include Māori and Pacific health workers who will work with you and your whānau.

Hospital chaplains are available to offer support through prayer and quiet reflection. Community-based health workers at your local marae and Pacific health services may also be good sources of support.



You can find more information on cultural and spiritual support on our website: www.cancer.org.nz/spirituality-and-cancer

How whānau can help

As a friend or whānau member of someone diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, you are learning to cope with your own feelings and emotions. You may want to help but not know what to do. Here are some suggestions that might be useful.

Learn about pancreatic cancer and its treatment. This will help you understand what the person you are supporting is coping with.

Be thoughtful about offering advice. Listening while they talk or just being there with them are good ways to show you care.

Talk about your feelings together and be honest about what worries you.

Offer to go to appointments with them. You can be there for support, to take notes or, when appropriate, to take part in the discussions.

Respect that your whānau member or friend may want to talk to their treatment team alone.



The Cancer Society offers a range of resources to support you. You can find more information on how whānau can help in our *Supporting Someone with Cancer* booklet, available on our website:

www.cancer.org.nz/supporting-someone-with-cancer

We also have an online tool – Support Crew – to help you coordinate offers of help such as meals, childcare, and cleaning. You can also use it as a secure online channel to send updates to whānau members and friends. It is free to use.



You can find more information at www.supportcrew.co.nz

Questions you may wish to ask

When you hear you have pancreatic cancer, you and your whānau may feel understandably frightened and you may have many questions. Here is a list of questions you may want to ask to help you make the most of your time with your doctor.

Let your doctor know if there are things you do not want to be told.

- What type of pancreatic cancer do I have?
- How far has my cancer spread? What stage is it?
- What scans do I need?
- What treatment do you advise for my cancer and why?
- Are there any private treatments available that you would advise for my cancer, and why?
- Are there other treatment choices for me?
- What are the risks and possible side effects of each treatment?
- Will I have to stay in hospital, or will I be treated as an outpatient?
- How long will the treatment take?
- How much will it affect what I can do?
- How much will the treatment cost?
- If I need further treatment, what will it be like and when will it begin?
- How often will my check-ups be and what will they involve?
- Are there any problems I should watch out for?
- If I choose not to have treatment either now or in the future, what services are available to help me?
- When can I return to work?
- When can I drive again?
- Will the treatment affect my sexual relationships?
- Is my cancer hereditary (passed on by my parents)?
- Is the treatment attempting to cure the disease or not?
- What is my prognosis (future outlook)?
- I would like to have a second opinion. Can you refer me to someone else?

If there are answers you do not understand, feel comfortable saying:

- “Can you explain that again?”
- “I am not sure what you mean”
- “Could you draw a diagram or write it down?”



You can find more information in our *Questions You May Wish to Ask booklet*, which has general questions and spaces in which you or your doctor can write answers. You can also phone the Cancer Information Helpline (**0800 CANCER 226 237**) for further information or visit our website: www.cancer.org.nz/questions-to-ask