

MAY NEWSLETTER

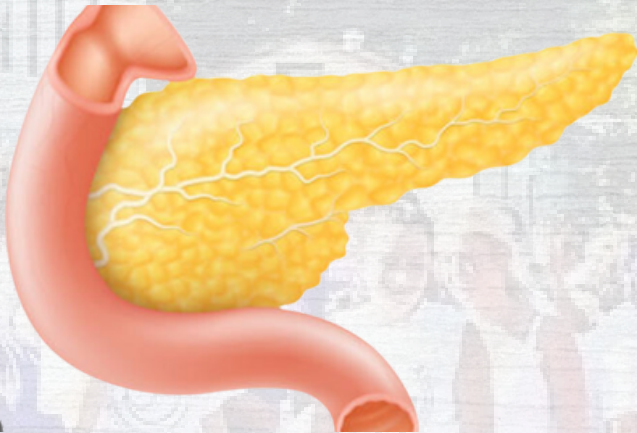


THE FIRST EDITION OF THE WHITNEY MARSH FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER!

Our promise to Arkansas.

A statement from our President, Madison Marsh.

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DR. SONIA ORCUTT

Featured interview on all things pancreas.



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Know the Symptoms. Save a Life.

Learn about ten warning signs of pancreatic cancer to help with earlier detection

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WHIPPED WITH WHIT

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White Bean Chicken Tortilla Soup



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OUR PROMISE TO ARKANSAS.

BY MADISON MARSH,
PRESIDENT OF THE WHITNEY MARSH FOUNDATION



For the last five years, The Whitney Marsh Foundation has been dedicated to bringing updated technology, medical knowledge, and patient advocacy to Fort Smith, Arkansas. However, pancreatic cancer requires a more aggressive fight for our Arkansans. Pancreatic cancer is the #3 leading cause of cancer related deaths in the U.S. Arkansas has one of the highest cancer mortality rates in the country. Something *must* change.

Our continued dedication for our state brings a new change to fight this disease. **100%** of funds raised in 2024 will be given back to Arkansas. We are grateful for our partners at Fort Smith's Mercy Hospital and we are excited to expand our impact across the entire state. Whitney's legacy alongside all Arkansans that have passed from pancreatic cancer will spark change in our home state.

Together, we can bring a brighter future for our state that gives patients a chance to survive. The hope to survive a diagnosis and a long life filled surrounded by loved ones -- Let's give every Arkansan that opportunity.

That hope is spreading across our state because of our dedicated donors, volunteers, and participants year after year. It's Time To Cure.™

Very Respectfully,

President of The Whitney Marsh Foundation

WELCOMING OUR 2024 TEAM

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Know the symptoms. Save a life.

EARLY STAGES OF PANCREATIC CANCER DO NOT ALWAYS HAVE SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS. INCLUDED HERE ARE ASSOCIATED SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS WITH PANCREATIC CANCER MORE COMMONLY SEEN IN THE LATER STAGES. AS A GENERAL DISCLAIMER, THESE SYMPTOMS CAN BE SEEN IN ASSOCIATION WITH MANY DISEASES AND HEALTH CONCERNS. IF YOU ARE CONCERNED THAT YOU MAY SIGNS OF POTENTIAL PANCREATIC CANCER CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR TO BE SEEN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Fatigue

- Feelings of tiredness without a known cause such as increased physical activity. Although many diseases and other issues cause fatigue this is one symptom of pancreatic cancer that is often seen in combination with other signs. The lack of energy is also connected to difficulty sleeping and decreased moods.

Physical weakness

- Signs of decreased physical strength have been noted in patients with pancreatic cancer. This is personal to the individual but can be deemed as a decrease in one's physical strength from their regular baseline.

Jaundice

- Literature has supported jaundice as one of the very first symptoms seen in patients with pancreatic cancer. Jaundice can be seen as the yellowing of skin and eyes, dark urine, greasy stools, and itchy skin. This is caused by an increase of bilirubin which is a substance made in the liver and has a dark yellow color. An increased amount of bilirubin can occur when the bile duct is blocked and bile can not be transported to the intestines.

Decreased appetite and weight loss

- Unintentional weight loss is often seen in patients with pancreatic cancer. This is thought to be caused by a decreased appetite that is also an associated sign.



Know the symptoms. Save a life.

Abdominal and back pain

- Cancers growing within the pancreas can increase the overall size of the pancreas which is located in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen. This increased size can cause irritation and pain as it presses against the back and other organs.

Nausea and vomiting

- Nausea and vomiting can be associated with pancreatic cancer. This is connected back to the increased size of pancreas and it is potentially pressing against the stomach.

Gallbladder enlargement

- If the tumor is growing and blocking the bile duct it may cause the gallbladder to increase in overall size. This may be felt upon physical exam of the upper right quadrant of the abdomen.

Liver enlargement

- The liver is another organ that can increase in size because of pancreatic cancer. This may also be able to be detected on physical exam by palpating the liver located in the upper right quadrant of the abdomen.

Blood Clots

- Blood clots have been found in patients with pancreatic cancer. They have most commonly been seen in the large saphenous vein which is in the legs. Symptoms of a blood clot can include pain, swelling, redness, and warmth of the leg.

Diabetes

- Pancreatic cancer can manifest as diabetes. This is because the tumor growing within the pancreas interferes with the insulin creation that also occurs in the pancreas. Sudden onset of diabetes in an adult who has never had issues with high blood sugar or diabetes in the past is a sign of possible pancreatic cancer.

CASTILLO CF. CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS, DIAGNOSIS, AND STAGING OF EXOCRINE PANCREATIC CANCER. UPTODATE WEBSITE.

[HTTPS://WWW.UPTODATE.COM/CONTENTS/CLINICAL-MANIFESTATIONS-DIAGNOSIS-AND-STAGING-OF-EXOCRINE-PANCREATIC-CANCER](https://www.uptodate.com/contents/clinical-manifestations-diagnosis-and-staging-of-exocrine-pancreatic-cancer). UPDATED OCTOBER 13, 2023.

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[HTTPS://WWW.CANCER.ORG/CANCER/TYPES/PANCREATIC-CANCER/DETECTION-DIAGNOSIS-STAGING/SIGNS-AND-SYMPTOMS.HTML](https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/signs-and-symptoms.html)

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PHILADELPHIA, PA: LIPPINCOTT WILLIAMS & WILKINS; 2015.



INTERVIEW WITH DR. SONIA ORCUTT ON ALL THINGS PANCREAS

BY MADISON HARAWAY, UAMS MEDICAL STUDENT

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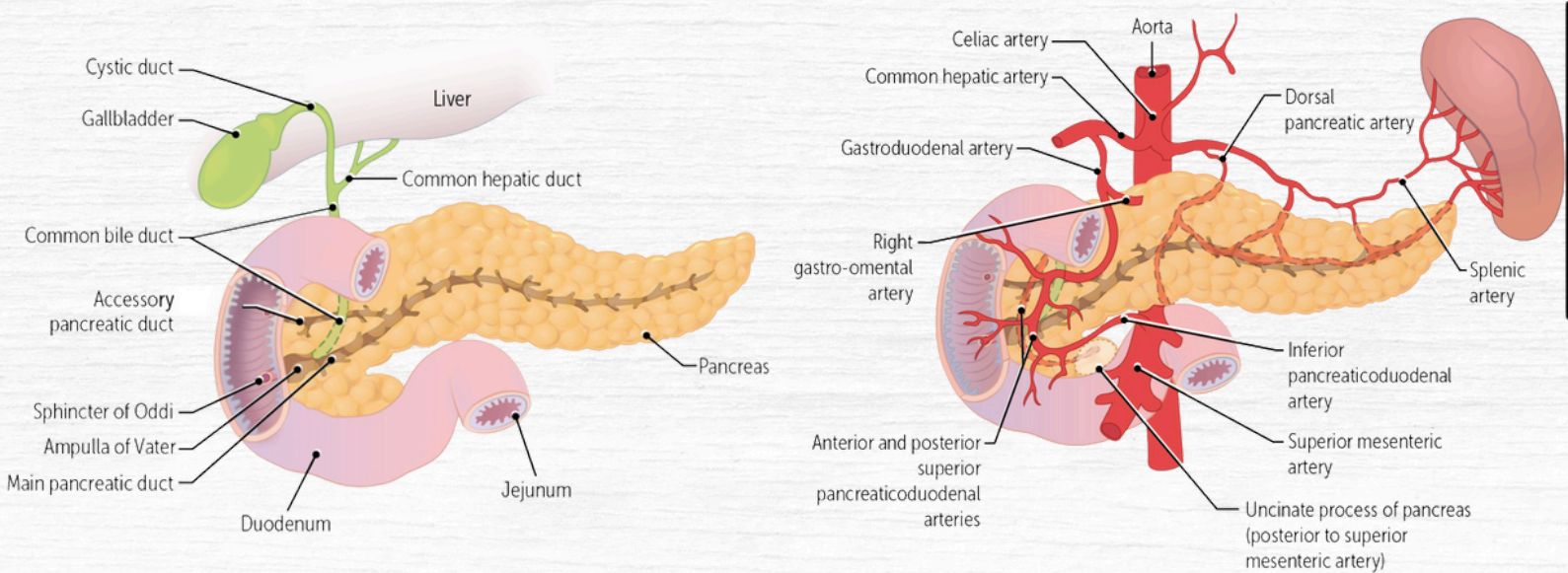
Dr. Sonia Orcutt is a board-certified surgical oncologist who treats a broad range of cancers, including those of the liver, pancreas, small intestine, appendix, and stomach, with an interest in minimally invasive approaches (laparoscopic and robotic). She received her medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine and completed her residency in general surgery at Baylor College of Medicine followed by fellowship in complex general surgical oncology at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. She practiced in Illinois prior to joining UAMS as the director of surgical oncology.

In this section, we'll be covering pancreas anatomy and physiology as well as pancreatic cancer development and risks!



What is the pancreas?

The pancreas is a tadpole-shaped organ located behind the stomach in the left upper abdomen. The pancreas is divided into four parts: head, neck, body, and tail. The head is positioned toward the center of the abdomen in the curve of the duodenum, which is the first part of the small intestine where the stomach empties partially digested food. The uncinate process is the part that curls under the head of the pancreas. The neck and body make up the middle sections of the pancreas, and the tail lies next to the spleen on the left side of the abdomen. The pancreas is protected by the ribcage and stretches horizontally in the abdomen, so it is difficult to palpate or damage. The pancreas has both exocrine and endocrine functions, which will be covered shortly!

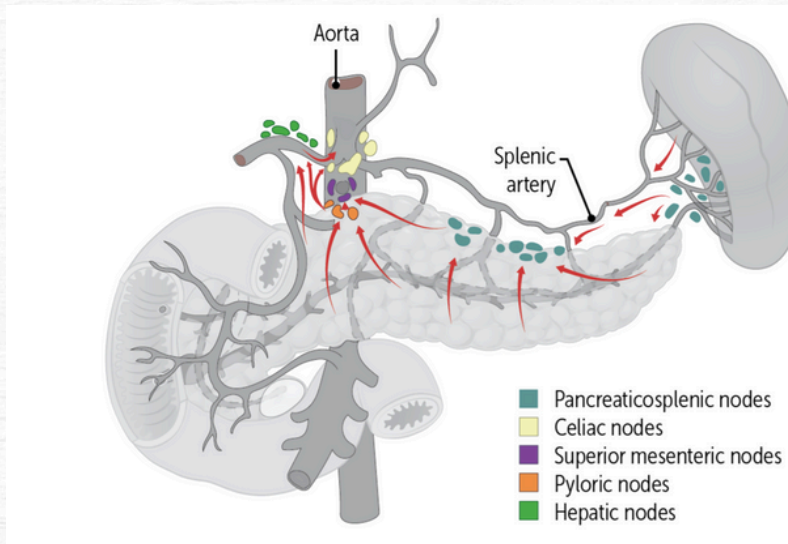


Credit: ScholarRx

The pancreas has collateral blood circulation, which means that it is supplied by multiple vessels with redundant, overlapping territories. The celiac trunk directly branches from the aorta and gives way to the common hepatic artery and splenic artery. The superior mesenteric artery (SMA) also directly branches from the aorta and gives rise to the inferior pancreaticoduodenal artery. Connections between branches of the celiac trunk and SMA ensure that the pancreatic head almost always has sufficient blood supply. The veins generally follow the arteries, with the splenic vein collecting blood from the pancreas and delivering it to the portal vein.

Lymph nodes are small, bean-shaped structures that are part of the body's immune system. They work as filters for foreign substances, such as cancer cells and infections. There are nearby groups of lymph nodes that drain lymph fluid, containing fluid and waste products, from the pancreas. Lymph fluid from the tail and body drain into the pancreaticosplenic nodes then to the superior mesenteric artery nodes, while lymph fluid from the neck and head drains to the pyloric nodes then to the hepatic or celiac nodes. These lymph nodes are often the first place where pancreatic cancer cells appear when they break away from a tumor.





Credit: ScholarRx

What is the exocrine function of the pancreas?

The pancreas mostly consists of exocrine tissue. The smallest units are acini, which are clusters of cells that secrete digestive enzymes to aid in the breakdown of protein, carbohydrates, and fats. These secretions are collected by a system of ducts that all empty into the main pancreatic duct running the entire length of the pancreas. The pancreatic duct joins the common bile duct coming from the liver and gallbladder and carrying bile. Pancreatic enzymes and bile are released into the duodenum at an opening called the ampulla of Vater.

What is the endocrine function of the pancreas?

The pancreas also functions as an endocrine gland. The endocrine component of the pancreas consists of groups of cells called islets of Langerhans that produce hormones for circulation in the bloodstream. Alpha cells synthesize and secrete glucagon to signal the body to raise blood sugar during periods of fasting, like in-between meals. Beta cells synthesize and secrete insulin to signal the body to lower blood sugar after meals. The body needs a careful balance of these hormones to maintain proper blood sugar levels for normal functioning of organs like the brain, liver, and kidneys. Diabetes is a chronic disease characterized by insufficient insulin production (type 1) or insulin insensitivity (type 2) in which the body cannot effectively respond to elevated blood sugar.



What is pancreatic cancer?

The most common type of pancreatic cancer arises in the exocrine cells lining the ducts of the pancreas. This type of cancer is called ductal adenocarcinoma, and it is what people typically refer to when using the phrase pancreatic cancer. In contrast, cancer that forms in the hormone-producing endocrine cells of the pancreas are called neuroendocrine tumors (NETs) and include insulinomas and glucagonomas. NETs are much less common, more likely to go unnoticed, and tend to have a better outlook.

In general, cancer occurs when cells acquire changes in their DNA, which allows them to grow out of control and form tumors that can harm nearby healthy cells. Unfortunately, pancreatic cancer is usually not found early when it is easier to treat. Patients usually notice symptoms when the cancer is already advanced and has spread to other parts of the body, which is called metastasis. Additionally, pancreatic carcinoma often forms in the head of the pancreas, which is close to important blood vessels and bile ducts.

The incidence of pancreatic cancer is rising, and it is currently the fourth most common cause of cancer death in the United States. Pancreatic cancer is slightly more common in men, and the incidence increases with age. The average age at diagnosis is 71 years. The American Cancer Society estimates that about 66,440 people (34,530 men and 31,910 women) will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2024. Early detection of pancreatic cancer, before it spreads, is crucial because it can increase the chances of survival!

The common risks factors of pancreatic cancer



Age



*Obesity
and Diet*



*Family
history*



*Chronic
pancreatitis*



Diabetes

What are the risk factors of pancreatic cancer?

Risk factors for pancreatic cancer include family history of pancreatic cancer, cigarette smoking, diabetes, obesity, chronic pancreatitis, and various genetic syndromes. Of these factors, smoking is the most significant because it nearly doubles the risk! Chronic pancreatitis occurs due to repeated injury with destruction of exocrine cells of the pancreas caused by long-term heavy alcohol use and sometimes conditions like cystic fibrosis. It involves irreversible scarring and hardening of the pancreas. BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations cause defective DNA repair and are often linked to breast and ovarian cancers, but they can also predispose people to pancreatic cancer. With a family history of pancreatic cancer, it is a good idea to consider genetic screening, which we will cover in next month's newsletter!





WHITE BEAN CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

By Chef Orlando Ramos

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp Olive Oil
- 1 cup Onion Minced
- 1 lb Boneless Chicken Breast or thigh
- 4 cups Chicken Broth Low Sodium
- 14 oz Cannellini Beans Canned; Drained; Rinsed
- 2 cups Kale Collard, and/or spinach: Cut in to medium pieces
- 1 tsp Cilantro Minced
- 20 Tortilla Chips Unsalted; Crushed
- Salt To taste
- Pepper To taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add olive oil to a hot soup pot. Cook onions until translucent.
2. Add chicken until just golden brown without cooking all the way.
3. Add broth, beans and greens.
4. Bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer low for 20 minutes.
5. Add cilantro and tortilla chips. Cook until chips are soft.
6. Adjust seasoning. Serve hot.

<https://www.cancernutrition.org/recipes/white-bean-chicken-tortilla-soup/>



Nutrition Facts

Serves 6

Calories: 210

Total Fat: 4g

Saturated Fat: 1g

Sodium: 320mg

Potassium: 535mg

Total Carbohydrate: 19g

Dietary Fiber: 4g

Protein: 25g