

Pancreatic Cancer Surgery

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Pancreatic cancer surgery is a primary treatment option for pancreatic cancer that has not spread beyond the pancreas or nearby organs. It is currently the only curative approach for pancreatic cancer, as surgery can remove cancerous tissue, potentially increasing survival rates and improving quality of life. Early diagnosis and timely surgical intervention are essential, as pancreatic cancer is often diagnosed at an advanced stage. At Birmingham Liver Clinic, we prioritise early detection and use advanced surgical techniques to provide effective, personalised care, helping to achieve the best possible outcomes for our patients.

Types Of Pancreatic Cancer Surgery

There are different types of pancreatic cancer surgery, depending on the location and stage of the cancer. The most common surgical options include:

- **Whipple procedure (pancreaticoduodenectomy):** This is the most common surgery for pancreatic cancer located in the head of the pancreas. The Whipple procedure involves removing the head of the pancreas, parts of the small intestine, bile duct, gallbladder, and sometimes part of the stomach. It is a complex surgery but can be life-saving when performed by experienced surgeons.
- **Distal pancreatectomy:** This procedure removes the tail and possibly part of the body of the pancreas, often along with the spleen. It is typically used when the cancer is located in the tail of the pancreas.
- **Total pancreatectomy:** In cases where cancer has spread throughout the pancreas, a total pancreatectomy may be required, which involves removing the entire pancreas, gallbladder, part of the stomach, part of the small intestine, and the spleen. While removing the pancreas means lifelong insulin therapy and enzyme replacement, this surgery can help control cancer spread.

Our experienced surgeons at Birmingham Liver Clinic will carefully assess each case to recommend the most appropriate surgical approach based on the cancer's location and stage.

Preparing For Pancreatic Cancer Surgery

Preparing for pancreatic cancer surgery involves several steps to ensure you are physically and emotionally ready. You may need to undergo a series of tests, including blood tests, imaging scans, and sometimes an endoscopic procedure to examine the pancreas more closely. Additionally, you may be advised to stop certain medications or supplements before surgery.

Our team will provide personalised guidance on pre-surgery preparation, including dietary recommendations

and information on managing post-surgery recovery. We may also refer you to a dietitian to help optimise your nutrition before and after surgery, which can support healing and recovery.

What To Expect During The Procedure

Pancreatic cancer surgery is performed under general anaesthesia and can take several hours, depending on the type of surgery. You will be in the care of a specialised surgical team at Birmingham Liver Clinic. After the procedure, you will be closely monitored in a recovery unit. Most patients stay in the hospital for 7-10 days to ensure a smooth recovery, and our team will provide comprehensive care and support throughout this period.

Recovery After Pancreatic Cancer Surgery

Recovery from pancreatic cancer surgery can take several weeks to months. It's normal to experience some pain, fatigue, and digestive changes, especially if parts of the digestive system were removed or altered. Our team will provide pain management support, dietary advice, and follow-up care to monitor your recovery. You may need to take enzyme supplements to aid digestion, and in some cases, insulin may be necessary if the pancreas has been fully removed.

Following surgery, regular follow-up appointments are essential to monitor for any signs of recurrence and to address any ongoing symptoms. Our multidisciplinary team will support you through your recovery, ensuring you have access to nutrition, physiotherapy, and any additional care needed to promote healing.

Benefits And Risks Of Pancreatic Cancer Surgery

Pancreatic cancer surgery offers the potential for a cure or significant control over cancer when detected early. Surgery can relieve symptoms and improve quality of life, allowing patients to return to daily activities. However, as with any major surgery, pancreatic cancer surgery has risks, including infection, bleeding, and complications related to digestion and blood sugar control. Our experienced surgeons at Birmingham Liver Clinic take every precaution to minimise these risks and provide high-quality post-surgical care to support a smooth recovery.

Choosing Birmingham Liver Clinic

At Birmingham Liver Clinic, we provide compassionate, high-quality surgical care for pancreatic cancer patients. Our skilled surgical team has extensive experience in complex pancreatic procedures, offering you the best possible outcomes. With a focus on personalised care, we guide our patients through each step of the journey, from diagnosis to recovery, ensuring comprehensive support and follow-up care.

Contact Us

To learn more about pancreatic cancer surgery or to schedule a consultation, please contact Birmingham Liver Clinic. Our team is here to support you with expert care and compassion at every stage of your treatment.