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## Section Two: Diagnosing pancreatic cancer

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*Tekiona Rua*  
Te whakatau i te  
matepukupuku  
repetaiaki huka



### Key points:

- If your GP or whānau doctor is concerned that your symptoms may be signs of pancreatic cancer, they will recommend further tests.
- These tests aim to find out the type of pancreatic cancer you have and if the cancer has spread to other parts of your body. The results of any tests you have will help your treatment team to decide on the best treatment options for you.
- Common tests include:
  - blood tests
  - imaging tests (scans)
  - ultrasound and endoscopic ultrasound (EUS)
  - endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)
  - biopsy
  - laparoscopy.

## Ngā kōrero matua:

- Mehemea kei te māharahara tō GP, tō rata rānei, he tohu pea o tohumate o te matepukupuku repetaiaki huka, ka taunaki rātou kia whāia anō he whakamātautau ake.
- Ko te whāinga o ēnei whakamātautau, ko te rapu ko tēwhea matepukupuku repetaiaki huka kai te whai koe, me te tiro mehemea kua hōrapa ki wāhi kē o te tinana. Ka āwhina ngā hua o ngā whakamātautau ka whai koe i tō rōpū whakamaimoa ki te whakatau ko tēwhea te kōwhiringa maimoa pai mōu.
- Ko ngā whakamātautau auau ka whāia, ko ēnei:
  - whakamātautau toto
  - whakamātautau ata (ngā mātāwai)
  - orotarapī me te karu tirowhakaroto orotarapī
  - unuhanga
  - unuhanga
  - pūtirohanga puku.

## Diagnosing pancreatic cancer

If you have noticed any of the symptoms of pancreatic cancer, you will usually see your GP or whānau doctor first. They will talk to you about your symptoms, examine your abdomen, and ask you about your family history of cancer and any risk factors you may have.

If your GP or whānau doctor is concerned that your symptoms may be signs of pancreatic cancer, they will recommend further tests.

These tests aim to find out the type of pancreatic cancer you have and if the cancer has spread to other parts of your body. The results of any tests you have will help your treatment team decide what the best treatment options are for you.

### Blood tests

Your doctor or specialist may suggest some blood tests to check your general health and how well your body is working. Blood tests may include:

- tests to check your general health
- liver-function tests to see how well your liver is working

- a specific test to check for pancreatic cancer markers in the blood. These are chemicals that are produced by the cancer that show up in a blood test, such as CA 19-9 and CEA.

## CT, MRI, and PET-CT scans

CT, MRI, and PET-CT scans are different imaging tests that are used to build a detailed picture of the inside of the body, looking for the size, location, and possible spread of any cancer.

## Ultrasound and endoscopic ultrasound (EUS)

Ultrasound can be done from either outside your body using a hand-held ultrasound probe, or inside your body using an endoscopic ultrasound (EUS). An endoscope is a thin, flexible tube that is put in your mouth and down your throat with a small ultrasound probe at the end of it. The endoscope can be moved through your stomach and into the first part of your small bowel (duodenum) as needed. Both of these ultrasound techniques can show the size and position of a cancer and the surrounding lymph nodes.

## ERCP

Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography, or ERCP, is used to diagnose and treat problems in the liver, gallbladder, bile duct, and pancreas. It combines x-ray and the use of an endoscope (a thin, flexible tube) that is put in your mouth and down your throat, past your stomach and into the first part of your small bowel (duodenum) to check for problems.

## Biopsy

A biopsy removes small samples of tissue from your pancreas. The tissue samples are looked at under a microscope to see if there are any cancer cells present. If cancer cells are seen in your biopsy sample, the information will help your treatment team to learn more about the type of pancreatic cancer you have. A biopsy can be taken during an EUS or ERCP, or as a fine needle biopsy through the skin.

## Laparoscopy

If you are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, you may have a small operation called a laparoscopy. This is done to check if the cancer has spread outside the pancreas to other parts of the body.

A laparoscopy is often done as a day surgery. The surgeon makes two or three small cuts near your belly button to insert a laparoscope (a thin tube with a light and camera on the end). During the laparoscopy the surgeon can take samples to send to the laboratory to check for cancer cells.