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# Test Detects Early Pancreatic Cancer

Researchers discovered a new blood test that can detect all stages of pancreatic cancer, including early stages, which are often difficult to diagnose. It works by measuring levels of a substance found in the blood of most people with pancreatic cancer, called the PAM4 protein. The PAM4 protein is not found in people with a healthy pancreas or people with an inflamed (swollen) pancreas, called pancreatitis. This means that it could help doctors better diagnose pancreatic cancer, which can be difficult to tell apart from pancreatitis when the cancer is small and just beginning to grow.

**What this means for patients**

?Most patients with pancreatic cancer are diagnosed when the disease is advanced and more difficult to cure,? said lead author David V. Gold, PhD, a member of the Garden State Cancer Center in New Jersey. ?In this study, we found that the PAM4 protein is quite accurate at identifying patients with pancreatic cancer and could be a promising tool for detecting this disease in its earlier, more treatable stages.? In the future, it may be possible to test people at risk for pancreatic cancer on a yearly basis to increase the chance of early detection.

**What to ask your doctor**

- What is my risk of pancreatic cancer?
- What can I do to reduce my risk?
- What are the current ways to diagnose pancreatic cancer?

**For More Information**

Guide to Pancreatic Cancer [1]

The Genetics of Pancreatic Cancer [2]

**Links:**
[1] http://www.cancer.net/node/19495
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/24902