

Soundbite Script – Putting a face on pancreatic cancer

Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, surgical oncologist, OSF HealthCare

“The pancreas is a gland in your upper abdomen that lies behind your stomach. It has two main functions; it excretes enzymes that helps you digest your food and helps you control your blood sugar by secreting insulin. Pancreatic cancer occurs when any cell or group of cells in the pancreas grow out of control and create a tumor.” (:20)

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“We really haven’t identified a cause of pancreatic cancer. Of all the pancreatic cancers about 5 to 10% are found in families, are associated with a genetic cause. The other 95% occur sporadically without a good cause. We have found risk factors – those who smoke have a higher risk of pancreatic cancer, those with a history of pancreatitis or inflammation of the pancreas, whether it’s due to alcohol intake or gallstones have a higher risk of pancreatic cancer and there is some association with obesity and pancreatic cancer.” (:17)

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“The treatments that we are proposing to patients are ever-evolving. There are clinical trials, and there are new pathways in treatments that we are testing on a daily basis to see if there is something we can do to really improve the long-term survival of these patients.” (:17)