

New hope in pancreatic cancer treatment (Broadcast)

INTRO:

FOR DECADES – PANCREATIC CANCER HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CANCERS TO TREAT. THE DEADLY CANCER HAPPENS WHEN INFECTIOUS CELLS GROW OUT OF CONTROL IN THE TISSUES OF THE PANCREAS. NOW – A NEW CLASS OF DRUGS TARGETING A LONG-ELUSIVE GENETIC MUTATION... MAY OFFER REAL HOPE.

TAKE VO

THIS YEAR – NEW DRUGS APPEAR TO BE WORKING AGAINST SOME OF THE MOST COMMON GENETIC MUTATIONS KNOWN IN PANCREATIC CANCER. THEY'RE IN CLINICAL TRIALS RIGHT NOW... SAYS DR. ROBERT MCWILLIAMS... A MEDICAL ONCOLOGIST WITH OSF HEALTHCARE. THE NEW THERAPIES ARE CALL KRAS (**K-RASS**) INHIBITORS. KRAS IS A GENE THAT HELPS CONTROL WHEN CELLS GROW AND DIVIDE. NORMALLY – IT WORKS LIKE A SWITCH... TURNING GROWTH ON WHEN THE BODY NEEDS IT... AND OFF WHEN IT DOESN'T. BUT WHEN KRAS MUTATES... THAT SWITCH CAN GET STUCK IN THE “ON” POSITION – CAUSING CELLS TO GROW NONSTOP AND EVENTUALLY FORM CANCER.

THE NEWS OF THE DRUGS IS SO IMPORTANT BECAUSE HISTORICALLY – TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR PANCREATIC CANCER HAVE ADVANCED SLOWLY COMPARED TO OTHER CANCERS. IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO CHEMOTHERAPY REGIMENS – AND PUTTING A CARE PLAN TOGETHER THAT INCLUDES CHEMO FIRST... FOLLOWED BY SURGERY.

TAKE SOT | DR. ROBERT MCWILLIAMS | MEDICAL ONCOLOGIST | OSF HEALTHCARE

"One of the things that's most challenging about pancreatic cancer, is that it can be there without causing specific symptoms. Even though a lot of people with advanced pancreatic cancer do have symptoms commonly, it is a very difficult cancer to detect early," Dr. McWilliams says. "Because of that, oftentimes people present with advanced or metastatic disease."

VO TAG

PANCREATIC CANCER – ONE OF THE DEADLIEST FORMS OF GASTROINTESTINAL CANCER – IS OFTEN DIAGNOSED LATE... WHEN TREATMENT OPTIONS ARE MORE LIMITED. RECENT DATA SHOWS ONLY 13-POINT-THREE PERCENT OF PEOPLE SURVIVED FIVE YEARS OR MORE AFTER BEING DIAGNOSED WITH PANCREATIC CANCER. ALMOST 52-THOUSAND PEOPLE DIED FROM THE DISEASE IN 2025. DR. MCWILLIAMS SAYS LIFESTYLE CHOICES CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN REDUCING CANCER RISK. HE SAYS DON'T SMOKE CIGARETTES... DON'T VAPE... AVOID DRINKING ALCOHOL... AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE... MEANING KEEP A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND EXERCISE REGULARLY.