

Soundbite Script – Putting a Face on Pancreatic Cancer

SOT: Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, Surgical Oncologist, OSF HealthCare

“The pancreas is a gland in your upper abdomen that lies behind your stomach,” said Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, surgical oncologist, OSF HealthCare. “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)

SOT: Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, Surgical Oncologist, OSF HealthCare

“Pancreatic cancer really is not that common,” said Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, surgical oncologist, OSF HealthCare. “The projections for 2020 is about 56,000 cases will occur in the United States. So when you think about a percentage of a population, it’s really not that common. There have been other estimations that say a single person of average risk has a lifetime risk of about 1 to 1 ½ percent of developing the disease.” (:23)

SOT: Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, Surgical Oncologist, OSF HealthCare

“We really haven’t identified a cause of pancreatic cancer,” said Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, surgical oncologist, OSF HealthCare. “Of all the pancreatic cancers about 5 to 10 percent are found in families, are associated with a genetic cause. The other 95 percent 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.” (:35)

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“The treatments that we are proposing to patients are ever-evolving,” said Dr. Eileen O’Halloran, surgical oncologist, OSF HealthCare. “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)