

## The most fatal cancers in Ontario

Pancreatic cancer is the most fatal cancer in Ontario, with a 5-year relative survival rate of 9%. All of the cancers shown in the graph, with the exception of lung cancer, occur infrequently, each with about 1,000 or fewer new cases diagnosed in Ontario per year. Lung cancer is one of the most common cancers and is also highly fatal, with a survival of only 16%.

An important reason for the poor survival from many of these cancers is that few of them are found early. Symptoms of several cancers (especially pancreatic, esophageal, lung, liver and stomach cancers) often do not appear until after the cancers have reached an advanced stage. Because of the anatomic location of the pancreas (behind the stomach and deep inside the upper abdomen) tumours can grow quite large and remain undetected. Despite the widespread use of diagnostic tests such as endoscopy for stomach and esophageal cancer, the outcome for these cancers has remained grim.

The effect of treatment on the course of these cancers is limited because most are diagnosed at an incurable stage and because advances in treatment have been small for most of them. Lung cancer, the most common of all fatal cancers with no known effective screening procedures and limited treatment options, causes more deaths than any other cancer. Prevention through reduction in tobacco smoking is still the most realistic strategy to control this disease.

For more information, talk to your health care provider or call Cancer Information Service (1 888 939-3333).

### Cancer Care Ontario

620 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M5G 2L7

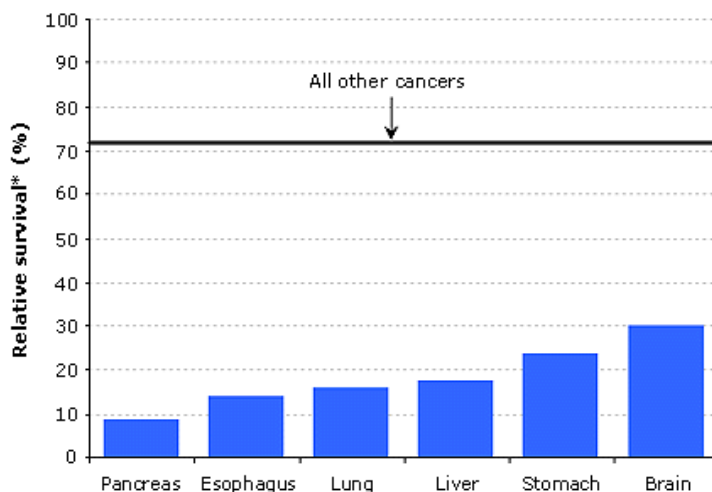
Phone: 416.971.9800

Fax: 416.971.6888

Email: [cancerfacts@cancercare.on.ca](mailto:cancerfacts@cancercare.on.ca)

[www.cancercare.on.ca](http://www.cancercare.on.ca)

Proportion of Ontarians alive 5 years after diagnosis  
1998-2002 period of follow-up



\* Relative survival compares how long people live after their diagnosis to how long people of the same age in the general population are expected to live. It is estimated here for people followed up in the 1998-2002 period.

Source: Cancer Care Ontario (Ontario Cancer Registry, 2005)