# Types of Pancreatic Surgery

**Distal pancreatectomy**

If your tumor is in the body or tail of the pancreas, we will do a distal pancreatectomy [DIS-tuhl PAN-kree-uh-TEK-tuh-mee].

**What is taken out:**

- Body or tail of the pancreas
- Sometimes the spleen

**Types of surgery:**

- One large incision (cut), or
- Four or more small incisions (called laparoscopic surgery)

**Length of surgery:** About 4 hours

**Length of hospital stay:** About 3 to 5 days

**Possible problems:**

- **Fluid drainage:** Because we don’t remove the whole pancreas, the part that’s left might leak some juices. For this reason, doctors will place a drain near the pancreas during surgery. If you have a leak, the drain will remove this liquid from your body.

We will likely take out the drain before you leave the hospital. But if there’s a leak, you will keep the drain until the leaking stops. This usually takes 3 to 6 weeks. Most people can be at home with a drain.

- **Diabetes:** Some people develop diabetes after surgery. If this happens, you will need to check your blood sugar daily. You may need lifelong medicine to keep your blood sugar at a normal level.

- **Digestive problems (exocrine insufficiency):** Your pancreas may no longer make digestive enzymes. If this happens, you will need lifelong medicine to help your body digest food.

**Total pancreatectomy**

If we remove the entire pancreas, this is called a total pancreatectomy. We use this surgery to get rid of tumors and to treat long-lasting, severe pancreatitis [PAN-kree-uh-TY-tis].

**What is taken out:**

- Pancreas
- Gallbladder
- Part of the duodenum (upper part of the small intestine)
- Bottom part of the stomach
- Some lymph nodes
- Sometimes the spleen

**Type of surgery:** One large incision (cut)

**Length of surgery:** About 6 hours
Length of hospital stay: About 7 to 10 days

Side effects:

- **Digestive problems**: You will need lifelong medicine to help you digest your food.
- **Diabetes**: You will need to take insulin to control your blood sugar levels. You will take this for the rest of your life.

If you are having surgery for pancreatitis, you might prevent diabetes through a special treatment called islet auto-transplant. Your doctor will tell you if this treatment may work for you. For more information, talk to your doctor or go to www.fvfiles.com/521217.pdf.

Possible problems:

- **Fluid drainage**: Fluid may leak from the spot where we connected your remaining pancreas to the intestines. Drains will remove the fluid until your body heals.
- **Digestive problems (short-term or lifelong)**: You may need to take medicine or change your diet.
- **Diabetes (rare)**: If this happens, you will need lifelong medicine to control your blood sugar.

Whipple procedure

Three out of four tumors occur in the head of the pancreas. In these cases, we may do a Whipple procedure to remove the tumor.

This is the most common surgery to remove tumors from the pancreas. It is sometimes called a pancreaticoduodenectomy (PAN-kree-AT-i-koh-duh-DUH-duh-NEK-tuh-mee).

**What is taken out:**

- Head of the pancreas
- Gallbladder
- Bile duct
- Part of duodenum (upper part of the small intestine)
- A small part of the stomach
- Some lymph nodes

We will re-connect the remaining part of the pancreas with the rest of your digestive system.

**Type of surgery**: One large incision (cut)

**Length of surgery**: About 6 to 8 hours