



Ovarian cancer



Ovarian cancer is cancer that starts in a woman's ovaries — the almond-sized organs in the lower abdomen that produce eggs and hormones. When ovarian cancer is found early, about 94% of women can beat it. But many times it isn't found until it has spread. That's why it is important to know the risk factors, signs and symptoms, and pay attention to your body.¹

Know your risk

Some types of ovarian cancer seem to run in families. If a woman in your family has had ovarian or breast cancer, make sure your doctor knows. Other things that seem to make a woman more likely to develop ovarian cancer are:^{1,2}

- **Age.** Ovarian cancer is most often found after menopause, in women 63 or older. It is relatively rare in women under 40.
- **Weight.** Women who are obese are at greater risk.
- **Reproductive history.** Your risk is higher if you:
 - Started having your period before you were 12.
 - Went through menopause after 50.
 - Never had a full-term pregnancy, or if you started having children after age 35.
 - Took certain medicines to help you get pregnant.
 - Used hormone therapy during menopause.

Your risk is lower if you:

- Had a full-term pregnancy before you were 26.
- Have had babies. Every full-term pregnancy lowers your risk.
- Breastfed your babies.
- Took certain birth control medicines.

Talk with your doctor about your health history and risk factors.

Helpful resources

To learn more about ovarian cancer, visit WebMD's Ovarian Cancer Health Center at webmd.com. You can also find information and support for women facing cancer of the reproductive organs at wcn.org, the Women's Cancer Network.



Sources

1 American Cancer Society website: Ovarian Cancer (accessed March 2015): cancer.org

2 WebMD: Ovarian Cancer Health Center (accessed March 2015): webmd.com

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Early treatment can save your life

Right now there aren't any good screening tests for ovarian cancer. It can cause symptoms even in the early stages, but the same symptoms can often be caused by other, less serious problems.² The difference is that they:

- Start suddenly.
- Feel different than normal digestive or menstrual problems.
- Happen almost every day and don't go away.

If you have any of the following symptoms almost daily for more than two or three weeks, make an appointment with your primary care physician or gynecologist right away.² The sooner a diagnosis is made, the better your chances.¹

- Bloating
- Pain in your pelvis or belly
- Trouble eating or feeling full quickly
- Feeling an urgent need to urinate or needing to go more often

Other symptoms can include fatigue, indigestion, back pain, constipation, pain during sex and changes in your menstrual cycle.²

Support for women with ovarian cancer

SHARE, a self-help group for women with breast or ovarian cancer, operates a toll-free hotline for women who have just been diagnosed. Dial 844-ASK-SHARE to speak with a cancer survivor to get support and advice for dealing with your diagnosis. Visit the group online at sharecancersupport.org.

Visit anthem.com for more ways to get healthy — and stay healthy.

Did you know?

The more periods a woman has, the more likely she is to develop ovarian cancer. Women who started their periods before age 12, started menopause after 50, never had babies and didn't breastfeed are at a higher risk.^{1,2}

