

OVARIAN CANCER

*Facts about Ovarian Cancer
Philoptochos Women
Need to Know*

IT IS A DEADLY DISEASE:

- Ovarian cancer kills more women than all other reproductive cancers combined
- One in 72 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer in her lifetime
- Of this number, 78% will be diagnosed AFTER the disease has spread
- 90% of women who get ovarian cancer have no family history of the disease

IT IS HARD TO DETECT:

- Unlike some other women's cancers, **there is no one reliable test for ovarian cancer**. It is not enough to have a Pap smear which only screens for cervical cancer, nor is a mammogram enough which only screens for breast cancer.
- As a result, ovarian cancer is difficult to diagnose because some women have no symptoms or just mild ones until the disease has advanced, and sometimes, the symptoms are subtle and easily confused with other conditions.

AWARENESS & EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES:

- Philoptochos wants to make sure you know the symptoms of ovarian cancer so that you can act quickly. The sooner ovarian cancer is found and treated, the better the chance for recovery and survival.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF OVARIAN CANCER . . .

The symptoms of the disease are vague, are not always gynecologic, and can occur in the abdomen although the ovaries are in the pelvis. Research shows that women with ovarian cancer often report having the following symptoms, so please make note of the following:

- **A SWOLLEN OR BLOATED ABDOMEN.** Some women notice that their pants or skirts are getting tight around the waist. The bloating is a sign that fluid is building up in the abdominal cavity in later stage disease
- **PERSISTENT PRESSURE OR PAIN IN THE ABDOMEN OR PELVIS**
- **DIFFICULTY EATING OR FEELING FULL QUICKLY**
- **URINARY CONCERNS**, such as urgency or frequency
- **CHANGE IN BOWEL HABITS** with new onset constipation and/or diarrhea
- **UNEXPLAINED VAGINAL BLEEDING**

Any woman may have these symptoms for reasons not related to ovarian cancer. However, if these symptoms are new and unusual and persist daily for more than two weeks, a woman should see her doctor, preferably a gynecologist, and should ask about ovarian cancer.

CAUTIONARY NOTE: Many women who are eventually diagnosed with ovarian cancer spend several weeks or months seeing a variety of specialists to address symptoms, like those

above. For digestive symptoms, such as pressure in the abdomen, difficulty eating and constipation, they will see a gastroenterologist and might be diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome. For urinary problems, such as frequency or urgency, other symptoms seen in ovarian cancer, women often see a urologist and are told they have a urinary tract infection. These different specialists are not likely to perform a pelvic examination that might identify an ovarian tumor. Many women don't go to their OB/GYN, as it never occurs to them that their symptoms are related to their reproductive systems or ovarian cancer. These delays can allow the disease to progress, making it harder to treat successfully. Studies show that even women with early stage ovarian cancer can get the symptoms listed. Prompt attention may lead to detection of the disease at its earliest stage and with its best prognosis.

IF A WOMAN SUSPECTS OVARIAN CANCER, STEPS SHE SHOULD TAKE:

1. If a woman suspects she is having gynecological problems or has the symptoms of ovarian cancer she should see her OB/GYN.
2. If there is a suspicion of ovarian cancer based on early testing, she should seek a referral to a gynecologic oncologist as soon as possible before undergoing surgery, when the gynecologic oncologist will biopsy the ovary and assess the disease spread.
 - Gynecologic oncologists are specially trained physicians with expertise in diagnosing, performing surgical interventions and managing chemotherapy and other medical issues for ovarian cancer patients. Studies show that women with ovarian cancer treated by gynecological oncologists live longer than women treated by physicians without this specialty training.
3. Experts recommend a pelvic/rectal exam at a minimum, a transvaginal ultrasound and a CA125 test may also be necessary. If ovarian cancer is suspected ask to see a gynecologic oncologist. - See more at: <http://www.herafoundation.org/ovarian-cancer/symptoms/#sthash.6CPUpzck.dpuf>

RISK FACTORS:

A risk factor is anything that changes the likelihood of getting a disease like cancer. Although having one or more risk factor doesn't mean a woman will develop ovarian cancer, researchers have identified some factors that can impact chances of getting the disease.

AGE - Most ovarian cancers develop after menopause with half in those 63 years or older.

WEIGHT - Overweight women (BMI of at least 30) are at higher risk.

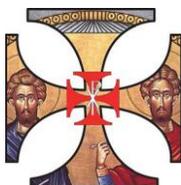
BIRTH CONTROL - Women who have used birth control pills are at a lower risk

REPRODUCTIVE HISTORY - Women who had full term pregnancies are at lower risk.

OTHER - Fertility drugs, hormone replacement therapy & family history can increase risk

For additional resources and more information:

- **HERA WOMEN'S CANCER FOUNDATION:** <http://www.herafoundation.org/ovarian-cancer/symptoms/>
- **OVARIAN CANCER NATIONAL ALLIANCE:** <http://www.ovariancancer.org/resources/>
- **AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY:** <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/index>
- **CANCER CARE:** http://www.cancercare.org/get_help/



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