

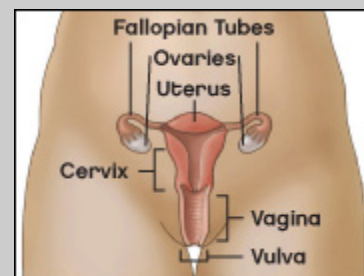
# Ovarian Cancer

## What is Ovarian Cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. Cancer is always named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other body parts later.

When cancer starts in the ovaries, it is called ovarian cancer. Women have two ovaries that are located in the pelvis, one on each side of the uterus. The ovaries make female hormones and produce eggs.

When ovarian cancer is found in its early stages, treatment is more likely to result in a cure.



## What are the symptoms of ovarian cancer?

Women with ovarian cancer report that symptoms are persistent and represent a change from normal for their bodies. The frequency and/or number of such symptoms are key factors in the diagnosis of ovarian cancer. Women who have these symptoms almost daily for more than a few weeks should see their doctor, preferably a gynecologist. The following symptoms are much more likely to occur in women with ovarian cancer than women in the general population. These symptoms include:

- \* Urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)
- \* Bloating
- \* Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- \* Pelvic or abdominal pain

Several other symptoms have been commonly reported by women with ovarian cancer. However, these other symptoms are not as useful in identifying ovarian cancer because they are also found in equal frequency in women in the general population who do not have ovarian cancer. These symptoms include:

- \* Fatigue
- \* Menstrual irregularities
- \* Indigestion
- \* Constipation
- \* Back pain
- \* Pain with intercourse

The preceding information does not take the place of medical advice.

## Who gets ovarian cancer?

All women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but older women are more likely to get the disease than younger women. About 90 percent of women who get ovarian cancer are older than 40, with the greatest number being age 55 or older.

## California Ovarian Cancer Awareness Program (COCAP)

COCAP is an ovarian cancer awareness program with the following goals:

- \* Promote early symptom recognition by healthcare providers and patients
- \* Educate healthcare providers
- \* Disseminate clinical trials information and treatment recommendations.

For more information about Ovarian Cancer please contact Hmong Women's Heritage Association: 916-394-1405

[http://www.cdoc-online.org/specific/cancer\\_ovarian.php](http://www.cdoc-online.org/specific/cancer_ovarian.php)



## How Can I Prevent Ovarian Cancer?

There is no known way to prevent ovarian cancer. But these things may lower your chance of getting ovarian cancer.

- \* Having used birth control pills for more than five years.
- \* Having had a tubal ligation (getting your tubes tied), both ovaries removed, or hysterectomy.
- \* Having given birth

## Are there tests that can find ovarian cancer early?

There is no simple and reliable way to test for ovarian cancer in women who do not have any signs or symptoms. The Pap test does not check for ovarian cancer. However, here are steps you can take:

- \* Pay attention to your body, and know what is normal for you.
- \* If you notice any changes in your body that are not normal for you and could be a sign of ovarian cancer, talk to your doctor about them and ask about possible causes, such as ovarian cancer.

Ask your doctor if you should have a test, such as a rectovaginal pelvic exam, a transvaginal ultrasound, or a CA-125 blood test if:

- \* You have any unexplained signs or symptoms of ovarian cancer. These tests sometimes help find or rule out ovarian cancer.
- \* You have had breast or uterine or colorectal cancer; or a close relative has had ovarian cancer.

[www.cdcc-online.org/specific/cancer\\_ovarian.php](http://www.cdcc-online.org/specific/cancer_ovarian.php)

## What raises a woman's chance of getting ovarian cancer?

There is no way to know for sure if you will get ovarian cancer. Most women get it without being at high risk. However, there are several factors that may increase the chance that you will get ovarian cancer, including if you:

- \* Are middle-aged or older.
- \* Have close family members on either your mother's or father's side who have had ovarian cancer.
- \* Have had breast, uterine, or colorectal cancer.
- \* Have an Eastern European (Ashkenazi) Jewish background.
- \* Have never given birth or have had trouble getting pregnant.
- \* Have endometriosis.



Where can I find more information about ovarian cancer?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1-800-CDC-info or [www.cdc.gov/cancer](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer)

National Cancer Institute  
1-800-4-CANCER or [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

