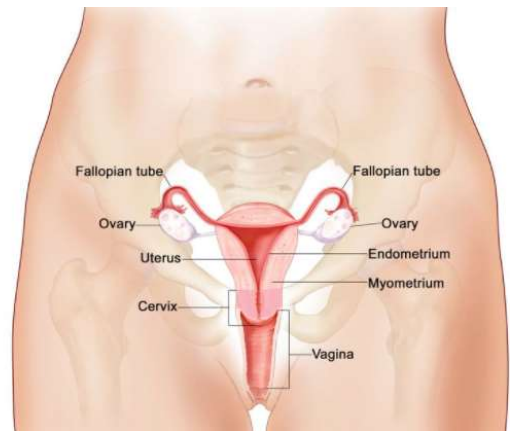


Ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer is a malignant (cancerous) growth that begins in the ovaries. The ovaries are a pair of organs that produce hormones and eggs for sexual reproduction. ¹



Risk factors:

- ▷ Age >50 ²
- ▷ Periods started at a very early age ²
- ▷ Periods stopped at an older age ²
- ▷ Family history of ovarian, breast or colon cancer ³
- ▷ Pregnancy >35 years old, never becoming pregnant ³
- ▷ Obesity ³

Signs and symptoms:

- ▷ Feeling bloated
- ▷ Indigestion/ heartburn
- ▷ Pain or pressure in the abdomen or pelvis
- ▷ Feeling full faster (early satiety) or trouble eating
- ▷ Feeling the need to urinate often or urgently
- ▷ Abnormal pelvic exam findings ¹

Patients with ovarian cancer may not have any symptoms until it has grown very large or has spread.

Many conditions could be the cause of these signs and symptoms. If ovarian cancer is suspected, there are further tests and procedures used to confirm the diagnosis. ¹



Diagnosis:

- 1 Blood tests to check tumor markers for signs of ovarian cancer. One most commonly used is called a CA125.
- 2 Imaging to visualize the ovaries and other pelvic structures to assess for abnormalities. They can also show if and how far the cancer has spread. This may include an ultrasound, CT scan, PET scan or MRI.
- 3 Tissue pathology is the most confirmatory test and is usually sent for testing during surgery to remove the cancer. Occasionally, a biopsy may be done before treatment if the cancer has spread too much to be removed by initial surgery.¹

Treatment options for ovarian cancer will be individualized and based on physical exam, pathology results and imaging. Treatment may include:

- ▷ Surgery to remove the cancerous ovary/ovaries. Surgical options and the procedures necessary will be discussed with your physician.
- ▷ Chemotherapy or radiation, either separately or in combination.⁴

Ways you can reduce your risk of developing ovarian cancer:

- ▷ Obtain routine health screenings including well women exams.
- ▷ Discuss any suggestive signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer with your physician
- ▷ Birth control pills lower the risk of ovarian cancer
- ▷ Maintain a healthy diet
- ▷ Full term pregnancies reduce the risk of ovarian cancer along with breastfeeding.
- ▷ Be aware if cancer runs in your family as certain types of cancer can be genetic. If you have a family history of cancer, discuss with your physician if genetic testing would be beneficial for you.⁵

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