

# Ovarian Cancer Symptoms



## Ovarian Cancer Awareness

### Know The Symptoms

Ovarian cancer has symptoms, even in its earliest stages. Knowing these symptoms could lead to lifesaving early detection:

- Bloating or increased abdomen size
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Feeling full quickly or unable to eat normally
- Urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)

Other symptoms commonly reported by women with ovarian cancer:

- Bowel changes including constipation, diarrhea
- Persistent indigestion, gas, nausea
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding, pain with intercourse
- Persistent lack of energy, shortness of breath

### Be Informed

These symptoms could be normal for you. However, it is important to listen to your body and see your healthcare professional if your symptoms:

- Are new or unusual for you.
- Are persistent and becoming more severe.
- Occur almost daily for more than 1-2 weeks.
- Or, if you are experiencing multiple symptoms.

### Tests May Include

- Vaginal/rectal pelvic exam
- Transvaginal ultrasound
- CA 125 blood test
- CT scan or MRI

**A Pap test is NOT a test for ovarian cancer**

(A Pap test is a test for cervical cancer)

### Ovarian Cancer Risk Factors

- Increasing age: Nearly 90% of women diagnosed are 45 years of age or over.
- A personal history of ovarian, breast or colon cancer.
- A family history of ovarian, breast or colon cancer (on father's or mother's side of family).
- Never been pregnant or given birth.
- A long menstrual history (first period before age 12 and/or menopause after age 50).
- Having a BRCA 1 or BRCA 2 gene mutation.

### Reducing Your Risk

- Using oral contraceptives (birth control pills)
- Pregnancy and breast feeding
- Oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries)
- Hysterectomy (removal of the uterus)
- Tubal ligation (fallopian tubes tied)

***Be informed, trust yourself, be as persistent as your symptoms!***

- Don't ignore symptoms.
- A vaginal/rectal pelvic exam should be part of your annual GYN exam.

If ovarian cancer is suspected, consult a gynecologic oncologist (a doctor who specializes in women's cancers). To find one in your area call **1-800-444-4441**.

(Sources: National Cancer Institute, American Cancer Society, Ovarian Cancer National Alliance)

### Ovarian and Breast Cancer Alliance

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