

Diagnosing Ovarian Cancer

No consistently reliable, accurate screening test exists to detect ovarian cancer. ***A Pap Test does not detect ovarian cancer.*** However, the following tests are the best available to date.

- ◆ ***Annual Rectovaginal Exam*** recommended for women age 35 and over
- ◆ ***Transvaginal/Ultrasound*** recommended for high risk women or those with an abnormal pelvic exam
- ◆ ***CA125 Blood Test*** which determines the level of a tumor marker. This test is not definitive as some non-cancerous conditions also increase CA125 levels and some ovarian cancers may not elevate the CA125 level.

If any of these tests are abnormal, consultation with a gynecologic oncologist is recommended.

Treatment Options

There are 3 main types of treatment for ovarian cancer:

- ◆ ***Surgery*** to remove the tumor or cancerous growth. To significantly improve survival rate, it should be performed by a gynecologic oncologist .
- ◆ ***Chemotherapy*** involving the use of drugs that travel through the bloodstream to kill cancerous cells. In later stage ovarian cancer, ***Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy***, where the drugs are injected directly into the abdomen, is used. In most cases, chemotherapy is used following a patient's recuperation from surgery.
- ◆ ***Radiation*** therapy, involving high energy x-rays to kill cancer cells and shrink large tumors, often prior to surgery. This is the least common method of treatment.

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About DOCF

The Delaware Ovarian Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit organization, was established in 2009 by Dorianne Short, an ovarian cancer survivor, diagnosed in 2003.

The mission of the Delaware Ovarian Cancer Foundation is to increase awareness and education about ovarian cancer among women and healthcare professionals in Delaware and the surrounding vicinity. The Foundation is committed to research and provides support for women affected by ovarian cancer.

Your Support is Needed

Please be part of our effort to bring a life saving message about ovarian cancer to the public and medical community. Your support will help to further our efforts in the fight against ovarian cancer. Donations in any amount are appreciated and may be designated in honor or in memory of a loved one. Donations to DOCF are tax deductible and can be made through the **Delaware Ovarian Cancer Foundation Fund**, a special purpose fund that is administered by the Delaware Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization. You can send a check payable to **'DOCF'** and mail to the address below or make an online donation at www.delcf.org

Tax Check-Off for Ovarian Cancer Research

*Did you know that there is **no reliable screening test** to diagnose ovarian cancer?*

Please support our mission by checking the box on the Delaware State Tax Form when preparing your taxes and donate \$1 or more to DOCF. Your donation will help fund much needed research for ovarian cancer.

For more information or to volunteer, contact:

Delaware Ovarian Cancer Foundation

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**What You Need
to Know About
Ovarian Cancer**

*Hope for the Present ...
a Cure for the Future*

Important Ovarian Cancer Information for *Females of ALL Ages*

Facts and Figures

Each year, more than 21,000 new cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed in the United States, resulting in over 15,500 deaths. Ovarian cancer is the 5th leading cause of cancer related deaths in women age 35 to 74. In the United States, about 1 in 58 women develop ovarian cancer, the deadliest of the gynecologic cancers. Unfortunately, the mortality rates have not significantly improved in the past 50 years.

Because there is no reliable diagnostic screening for ovarian cancer, it often goes undetected or is misdiagnosed until it has advanced to the later stages. Unfortunately, more than 75% women are diagnosed in the later stages where the 5-year survival rate is very low. Only 19% of cases are diagnosed early, resulting in an overall survival rate of less than 50%. Between 70 – 90% of all women who survive ovarian cancer eventually will have a recurrence or numerous recurrences of the disease.

Ovarian cancer does not discriminate. It can affect females of any age and ethnic background. The lack of public awareness and education about ovarian cancer is a critical health issue.

Although the symptoms of ovarian cancer often are not acute or intense (particularly in the early stages), they are *not* silent.

Symptoms

Even in its early stages, ovarian cancer has symptoms. Once thought to be a ‘silent disease’, research indicates that 95% of women with ovarian cancer have vague but persistent symptoms. Several health organizations have endorsed a consensus statement concluding that the following symptoms are likely to occur in women with ovarian cancer:

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

Other symptoms of ovarian cancer may include:

- ◆ Extreme fatigue
- ◆ Indigestion, heartburn or upset stomach
- ◆ Lower back pain
- ◆ Change in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea)
- ◆ Weight gain or weight loss
- ◆ Menstrual irregularities
- ◆ Pain during intercourse
- ◆ Shortness of breath

These symptoms are not always useful for diagnosis since they may be indicative of other conditions. However, if any symptoms persist for more than 2 weeks, consult your physician.

Risk Factors

Always be aware of what your body is telling you (symptoms), but also be aware that the following risk factors may apply:

- ◆ Genetic predisposition
- ◆ Personal or family history of breast, ovarian or colon cancer
- ◆ Increasing age
- ◆ Undesired infertility

Do not hesitate to initiate a possibly life-saving discussion about ovarian cancer with all your female relatives, friends and co-workers, as well as your physician. The more we all know, the better the chance of an early diagnosis and the less risk we have of losing the battle with ovarian cancer.

Be aware...it may save your life or the life of a loved one!

