

## Ovarian cancer: What to look out for

If you're regularly getting certain symptoms, your body may be telling you to get tested for ovarian cancer.

### The signs to watch out for are:

- **Persistent stomach pain**
- **Persistent bloating**
- **Finding it difficult to eat or feeling full quickly**
- **Needing to wee more often**

If you're getting any of these symptoms on most days, do talk to your GP. There might be nothing to worry about, but it's best to get yourself checked out.

**Other symptoms you may have noticed include** back pain, changes in your bowel habits (diarrhoea or constipation) or feeling tired all the time. Don't wait for symptoms like these to go away on their own. If you were to have ovarian cancer, catching it early could save your life.

## What should I do if I've noticed symptoms?

**If you think something's changed with your body, don't ignore it. And don't be afraid to talk to your GP.**

Your doctor will find it helpful if you can give them an idea of what's been happening and how often your symptoms tend to come and go.



It's easy to forget something important when you get to the surgery. That's why we've created a special **symptoms diary** to help you keep track.

You can use it to note down each time symptoms occur, when you first noticed them and if they seem to be getting worse. So when you show the diary to your doctor, it'll give them a better idea of what to do next.

**To get your free symptoms diary, return the tear-off slip in this leaflet, call us on 0300 456 4700 or download a copy from [www.ovarian.org.uk](http://www.ovarian.org.uk)**

## What if my GP is concerned about my symptoms

If your GP thinks there might a chance you have ovarian cancer, they'll arrange for you to have:

- **A CA125 blood test:** A positive result may indicate ovarian cancer, but not necessarily.
- **A scan:** An ultrasound can check for any abnormalities in your ovaries.

Neither of these tests is conclusive on its own. So if either of them suggests there's a chance you might have ovarian cancer, you'll need to have some more tests before any diagnosis is confirmed.

## Important

- Smear tests **don't** detect ovarian cancer.
- If the blood test and scan didn't pick up on anything but you're still getting symptoms, **go back to your GP.**

## How likely am I to get ovarian cancer?

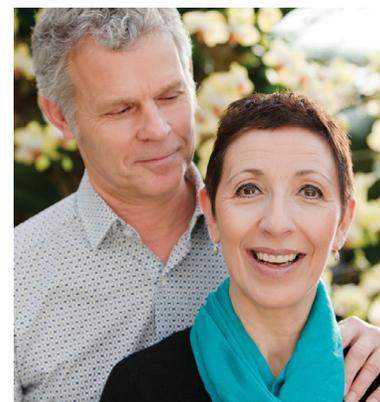
Ovarian cancer is quite rare. However, around 7,000 women in the UK are diagnosed with it every year, making it the fifth most common cancer among women in the UK.

### The two main risk factors for the disease are:

- **Getting older:** 80% of cases occur in women over the age of 50. However, younger women can develop ovarian cancer too.
- **Family history:** If two or more members of your family have had ovarian or breast cancer, you're at a greater risk of developing ovarian cancer yourself.

Some other factors that might also slightly increase your chances of developing ovarian cancer are:

- **A long menstrual history**, because you:
  - Started your period before you were 12
  - Went through the menopause after 55
  - Were over 30 when you had your first child
  - Have never had children
  - Have never breast fed
- **Endometriosis** (a condition of the womb)
- **Using oestrogen-only hormone replacement therapy (HRT)**
- **Smoking**



## Please complete, fold, seal and return this tear-off form

### I have used your leaflet in the following way (please tick all that apply):

- To improve my knowledge about ovarian cancer and its symptoms
- To help me raise awareness of ovarian cancer with people I know
- To help me talk to my doctor and
  - As a result of talking to my doctor I have been referred for further tests
  - It reassured me but I know to return if my symptoms persist
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### I'd like to make the following comments about the leaflet:

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### Please send me (please tick all that apply):

- Symptoms Diary
- Ovarian cancer – what you need to know
- Diagnosing ovarian cancer – what to expect
- Being treated for ovarian cancer – what to expect
- Hereditary ovarian cancer – what you need to know
- The current edition of our newsletter
- Would you like to be added to our mailing list?  
(You will receive our newsletter and occasional updates from our charity)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Privacy Statement:** If you have not asked to be added to our mailing list your information will only be used for the purpose of sending you the information that you requested and will not be stored by us; once the information request has been fulfilled your information will be securely disposed of. If you have asked to be added to our mailing list your information will be retained on our secure database in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

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**Ovarian cancer** is the **5th most common cancer** in women.

Around **7,000 women are diagnosed** with the disease each year in the UK.

**Ovarian Cancer Action** is dedicated to improving survival rates for women with ovarian cancer by raising awareness of the disease and its symptoms.

PLEASE FOLD HERE & SEAL

How can I lower my chances of getting ovarian cancer?

**You can reduce your risk of ovarian cancer by adopting a healthy lifestyle. Try to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, take regular exercise and avoid smoking.**



Get in touch

**For more information, contact: Ovarian Cancer Action**  
**by emailing [info@ovarian.org.uk](mailto:info@ovarian.org.uk)**  
**or calling 0300 456 4700**

#### Sources

McLemore, M., Miaskowski, C., Aouizerat, B., Chen, L. and Dodd, M., 2009 Epidemiologic and Genetic Factors Associated with Ovarian Cancer. *Cancer Nursing*, 32(4), p281.

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Prepared by: Ovarian Cancer Action

Reviewed by: Professor Hani Gabra

**ovarian cancer**  
**symptoms**  
you **shouldn't**  
**ignore**