



Ovarian Cancer Canada
Cancer de l'ovaire Canada

Dedicated to
overcoming
ovarian cancer

Think Ovarian!

About CA-125

This fact sheet has been written to help clear up confusing information that has been circulating about the CA-125 blood test and ovarian cancer.

Facts about Ovarian Cancer in Canada

- Each year, approximately 2,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and 1,700 women die from this disease.
- If detected early and treated, the survival rate is as high as 90%.
- Unfortunately, ovarian cancer is usually detected in the late stages, when five-year survival is as low as 20%.
- A Pap smear does **NOT** detect ovarian cancer—it detects problems with the cervix.
- The HPV vaccine helps prevent cervical cancer, **NOT** ovarian cancer.

CA-125 and screening

- The CA-125 blood test measures levels of a protein that can be affected by many health factors. It is **NOT** a screening test for the early detection of ovarian cancer.
- There is **NO** reliable screening test for the early detection of ovarian cancer.
- The CA-125 test is unreliable as a screening tool for ovarian cancer because it produces too many false positive and false negative results.
- It shows a true positive result for only about 50% of women with ovarian cancer at an early and more curable stage (Stage I).

OVARIAN CANCER

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- A false positive result can be caused by inflammatory conditions such as endometriosis, ovarian cysts, early pregnancy and pelvic inflammatory disease.
- The CA-125 test is less likely to detect ovarian cancer in younger women compared to women who have gone through menopause.

CA-125 as a diagnostic tool

- The CA-125, in conjunction with other tests, is a useful diagnostic tool when a woman experiences persistent symptoms. A CA-125 should not be used alone to detect ovarian cancer.
- If you experience **one or more** symptoms for ovarian cancer and they **last longer** than three weeks, ask your doctor about:
 1. a pelvic exam
 2. a transvaginal ultrasound
 3. a CA-125 test
- Signs and symptoms for ovarian cancer include:
 - swelling or bloating of the abdomen
 - pelvic or abdominal pain
 - difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
 - frequent or urgent urination
 - fatigue
 - gas, nausea, indigestion
 - menstrual irregularities
 - weight loss or weight gain
 - change in bowel habits
 - back pain

Be persistent. Find a doctor that you are comfortable talking with.

It's important to know...
**where to get more information
about ovarian cancer**



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Toll free: 1-877-413-7970
www.ovariancanada.org