Ovarian Cancer
Overlooked and Under-diagnosed

2,600 women are newly diagnosed each year in Canada.

Every year 1,750 Canadian women die from ovarian cancer.

Late detection results in five-year survival rates of less than 30%.

There is NO effective screening test for the early detection of ovarian cancer.

A Pap smear does NOT detect ovarian cancer—it detects problems with the cervix.

The HPV vaccine helps prevent cervical cancer, NOT ovarian cancer.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR
Symptoms are vague and can often mimic other conditions. See your family doctor if you have one or more of the symptoms below that are new and last longer than 3 weeks.

MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:
• bloating
• pelvic or abdominal pain
• difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
• urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)

OTHER SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE:
• change in bowel habits
• nausea
• fatigue
• menstrual irregularities
• weight loss or gain

WHAT INCREASES RISK OF OVARIAN CANCER?
• family history of breast, ovarian or colon cancer
• getting older—it’s more common after age 50

All women are at risk for ovarian cancer—but some are at higher risk.

WHAT DECREASES RISK OF OVARIAN CANCER?
• birth control pills
• term pregnancies
• removal of the ovaries and fallopian tubes
• breast feeding
• tubal ligation

If you are having gynecologic surgery, ask your doctor whether or not removal of the fallopian tubes would be beneficial to you. Recent research has found that a large proportion of ovarian cancers actually start in the fallopian tubes rather than on the ovaries. Further research is being conducted to evaluate whether or not removal of the fallopian tubes during gynecologic surgery would be beneficial.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?
• have regular pelvic exams
• let your doctor know if you have had new symptoms for more than 3 weeks

IF YOU ARE HAVING PERSISTENT SYMPTOMS SEE YOUR DOCTOR AND ASK ABOUT:
• a pelvic exam
• a transvaginal ultrasound
• a CA-125 blood test
(for more information visit ovariancanada.org)

If testing is negative and your symptoms persist, ask for a referral to a gynecologist or gynecologic oncologist.

• If you have a family history of breast, ovarian or colon cancer, speak with your doctor about genetic counselling.
• If your doctor suspects ovarian cancer, see a gynecologic oncologist. To find one in your area, contact Ovarian Cancer Canada at 1 877 413 7970 or info@ovariancanada.org.

BE PERSISTENT. FIND A DOCTOR THAT YOU ARE COMFORTABLE TALKING WITH.

FOR INFORMATION ON OVARIAN CANCER:
Ovarian Cancer Canada
1 877 413 7970
ovariancanada.org ovarianknowledge.ca
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