

OVARIAN CANCER

What All Women Need to Know

Ovarian cancer is a killer disease.

- It is the deadliest of all gynecologic cancers and the fifth leading cause of cancer deaths among American women.
- A woman's lifetime risk of developing invasive ovarian cancer is 1 in 72.
- Approximately 22,000 American women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2014.
- About 14,000 women will die from ovarian cancer in the United States in 2014.

Early detection greatly increases survival.

- Ovarian cancer is difficult to diagnose because symptoms are often subtle and easily confused with other conditions.
- When ovarian cancer is detected before it has spread beyond the ovaries, nine out of 10 women will survive for more than five years. However, only 15 percent of ovarian cancer cases in the United States are diagnosed at this early stage.

Learn ovarian cancer's subtle symptoms.

- Many people do not know that ovarian cancer causes these symptoms in the majority of women who develop the disease: bloating; pelvic and abdominal pain; difficulty eating or feeling full quickly; and urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency).
- Additional symptoms may include fatigue, indigestion, back pain, pain with intercourse, constipation and menstrual irregularities.
- Research shows that women with ovarian cancer do experience symptoms. Without increased education, many women and their doctors, will ignore or misinterpret symptoms.
- Women need to know if they may be at a higher risk for ovarian cancer, and what action to take, such as exploring whether to have a hysterectomy. Factors that increase risk include: increasing age; personal or family history of ovarian, breast or colorectal cancer; and never having been pregnant or given birth to a child.

More research is needed to develop an early detection test and a cure.

- There is no reliable and easy-to-administer early detection test for ovarian cancer (the Pap test, which screens for cervical cancer, does not detect ovarian cancer).
- Ovarian cancer research is drastically under-funded from a survival perspective. Federal appropriations for ovarian cancer research have declined in real dollars, although the death rate has remained stagnant for 30 years.

The Ovarian Cancer National Alliance offers a free Symptom Diary App, which women can use to track symptoms and risk factors. Learn more and access the app at OvarianCancer.org/app

