

Every woman needs to talk to her doctor.

If any of the symptoms listed in this brochure ring true for you, or if you are concerned about your family history or other risk factors, you need to talk to your doctor.

Ask your doctor: 'Could it be my ovaries?'

Your doctor should perform a pelvic examination. If this is abnormal or if no other explanation can be found for your symptoms, ask your doctor to arrange a transvaginal (internal) ultrasound.

Your doctor may also order a CA125 blood test. This test cannot be used to screen for or diagnose ovarian cancer, but it is a useful test to help with diagnosis when used together with other tests in women who have symptoms.

If your pelvic examination, ultrasound and/or CA125 test results suggest that ovarian cancer is a possibility, ask your doctor to refer you to a gynaecological oncologist as soon as possible.

A gynaecological oncologist specialises in treating cancers of the reproductive tract and has very specialised skills. Research shows that women with ovarian cancer have a better outcome when they are treated by a gynaecological oncologist.

**The PAP test does NOT detect ovarian cancer.
When in doubt rule your ovaries out!**

About Ovarian Cancer Australia

Ovarian Cancer Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation providing support and advocacy for people affected by ovarian cancer, and is the peak body for ovarian cancer awareness and prevention. Our programs are focused on:

- Promoting awareness of ovarian cancer and its symptoms in the community – giving Australian women and their healthcare providers a better understanding of the early signs of ovarian cancer
- Providing support networks and resources to women and their families and friends affected by ovarian cancer
- Advocating with medical professionals, government and the media for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer

We are the only national organisation that is dedicated to supporting Australian women, their families and friends who have been affected by ovarian cancer.

How to donate

Your generosity will allow Ovarian Cancer Australia to continue developing and expanding awareness and support programs to create a future of hope for all women.

Donate securely online at www.ovariancancer.net.au or call **1300 660 334** to make a donation over the phone.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Visit www.ovariancancer.net.au to learn more about Ovarian Cancer Australia's projects and events.

Ovarian Cancer Australia Limited, ABN 76 097 394 593

For more information see your
doctor or telephone
Ovarian Cancer Australia 1300 660 334
www.ovariancancer.net.au



Ovarian Cancer Australia

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Every woman needs to know the
symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Make sure you do.



Every woman needs to know more about ovarian cancer.

One in 77 women will develop ovarian cancer in their lifetime. It could be you, your sister, your mum, your gran or your girlfriend.

Each year, more than 1,200 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer; around 800 will die from the disease. On average 3 Australian women are diagnosed every day.*

Approximately 75% of women are diagnosed at an advanced stage, where the cancer has spread and is very difficult to treat successfully.*

More than half these women will not live for five years after their diagnosis.

But if ovarian cancer is diagnosed early, up to 80% of women will be alive and well after five years.*

More women need to be diagnosed at an early stage when ovarian cancer is very treatable.

There is currently no reliable early detection test or screening program for ovarian cancer (the pap smear does not test for ovarian cancer).

So every woman needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer has previously been called a silent killer, but we now know that the symptoms are NOT silent.

Almost all women with ovarian cancer experience symptoms, even in the early stages.

Being aware of these symptoms and risk factors and talking to your doctor if you are concerned could save your life.

* Ovarian Cancer in Australia: An Overview 2010: A report by Australian Institute of Health & Welfare and National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre

Every woman needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer.

It can be difficult to diagnose ovarian cancer because the symptoms are ones that many women will have from time to time, and they are often symptoms of less serious and more common health problems.

But when these symptoms are new for you, have persisted for two weeks or more, and you have them on all or most days, then it's definitely time to see your doctor:

- Increased abdominal size or persistent bloating
- Unexplained abdominal or pelvic pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Needing to urinate often or urgently or a change in bowel habits

Also let your doctor know if you have any other symptoms that are not usual for you. These may include:

- Unexplained weight gain or loss
- Vaginal bleeding
- Back pain
- Indigestion or nausea
- Excessive fatigue

There is no reason to panic. Most women with these symptoms will *not* have ovarian cancer. Your doctor should first rule out more common causes of these symptoms. If there is no clear reason for your symptoms, your doctor needs to consider the possibility of ovarian cancer.

If you are not comfortable with your doctor's diagnosis, you should seek a second opinion.

Every woman needs to be aware of the risk factors.

There are a number of factors that can increase a woman's risk of developing ovarian cancer:

Age is the main risk factor for ovarian cancer. The risk increases with age, and women aged over 50 are more likely to develop ovarian cancer. However, ovarian cancer can affect women of all ages.

Family history and genetics are probably responsible for 10% of ovarian cancers. If you have two or more relatives from the same side of the family who have had ovarian, breast, colon or endometrial cancer, your risk of ovarian cancer may be increased.

You can read more about genetic risk at www.ovariancancer.net.au

Other factors that may increase the risk of ovarian cancer include:

- Never being pregnant, having a small number of pregnancies or never having taken the contraceptive pill – this may be because pregnancy and the pill give the ovaries a 'rest' from ovulation.
- Infertility and/or a history of using fertility treatments.
- Using oestrogen-only hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for 10 or more years.
- Smoking cigarettes.
- Eating a high fat diet, or being overweight or obese.

On the other hand, having several children, breastfeeding and using the contraceptive pill may reduce the risk.

Ovarian Cancer Australia is proudly supported by:

