



Ovarian Cancer ...

Also called **Cancer of the Ovaries**

What Women Need to Know

What Should I Look For?

Cancer of the ovaries is very hard to find. There may be no signs or symptoms until the cancer has spread. Things you may feel or see about your body may not seem as if they are connected to cancer. These signs usually are not caused by cancer, but you should report any of the following signs to your doctor right away:

- Bloating or swelling in the stomach from extra fluids. This swelling is different than what you might feel when you are having your monthly period;
- Weight gain or loss without any reason;
- Enlargement in the size of the stomach area;
- Bleeding or other discharge from your vagina (not your normal period);
- Stomach problems that do not go away. You might have pain, gas, or nausea;
- Back or leg pain.

What Adds to My Risk?

Risks that add to your chance of getting cancer of the ovaries include:

- Being over the age of 50;
- Having your first period early (before the age of 12);
- Never having been pregnant and given birth;
- Giving birth to a first child after the age of 30;
- Smoking cigarettes;
- Inability to get pregnant;

- Having breast cancer, now or in the past;
- Having a family member who has had cancer of the breast, colon, or ovaries;
- Being highly overweight;
- Using therapy for a long time that replaces a certain hormone in the body called "estrogen" known as estrogen replacement therapy or hormone replacement therapy.

How Can I Help Find Cancer of the Ovaries Early?

- Women who are having sex or who are over 18 years old should have a pelvic exam every year.
- During a pelvic exam, the doctor will feel the female organs, checking their size and shape, but most ovarian cancers are hard to find early. It is hard because the ovaries are deep inside the body and the doctor cannot feel them easily. The Pap test can find cancer of the cervix early. It cannot help in finding cancer of the ovaries early.
- There are other tests that can help find cancer of the ovaries, but they may not find it early. You and your doctor will discuss which tests are best for you. It will depend on your age and your medical history. It will also depend on any unusual things you have noticed about your body. The tests include different blood tests and a painless test called an ultrasound.

Continued on back



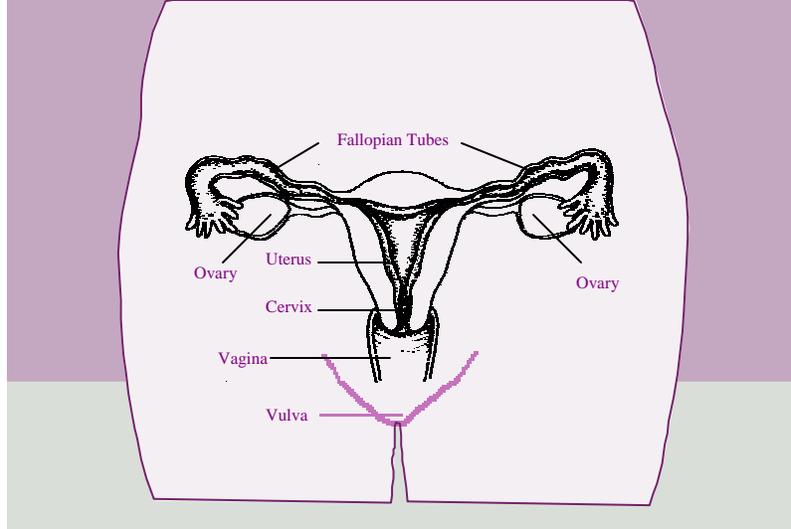
How to Treat Cancer of the Ovaries?

There are many ways that doctors can treat cancer of the ovaries.

- Surgery is used to remove one or both ovaries, the fallopian tubes, and the uterus. Only the ovary that has cancer will have to be removed when cancer is found early. This is helpful for young women who wish to have a baby.
- After surgery, chemotherapy is used to treat any cancer that is left.
- In the USA, radiation therapy is not used often to treat this cancer.



All women who are having sex or who are over 18 years old should have a pelvic exam every year.



What are My Chances of Living After Getting Cancer of the Ovaries?

- Most women (90%) will live five years or more if cancer of the ovaries is found early.
- More women die from cancer of the ovaries than from any other women's reproductive cancer.

Tell your doctor if you have any symptoms. Talk to your doctor if you have questions about your health or your treatment. Your doctor can give you more information about cancer of the ovaries.

*Source: California Cancer Registry (CDHS/CSS)
American Cancer Society Facts and Figures 2004.*

This Fact Sheet may be downloaded at the California Department of Health Services Office of Women's Health web site:
www.dhs.ca.gov/director/owh.

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