



OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS

Ovarian cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in women in the USA. The ovaries are two reproductive organs on each side of the uterus that produce female hormones and eggs. Ovarian cancer is malignant cells that are found in the tissues of the ovary. It is very difficult to detect in the early stages because there are no effective screenings or tests for the disease and the symptoms are often non-specific.

All women are at risk but some specific risk factors for ovarian cancer include family history. If a woman has a first-degree relative (grandmother, mom, sister, or daughter) that has/had cancer of the uterus, colon, breast, or rectum she is more likely to develop ovarian cancer, and at an early age (under 50-years-old). Women without a family history have a higher risk of developing ovarian cancer after the age of 55. Women who are obese, have a history of long-term hormone therapy, or have never been pregnant are also at an increased risk for ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer risk reduction:

- Use of oral contraception especially when used for five or more years
- Having children and breastfeeding them
- Tubal ligations, hysterectomies, and removal of the ovaries are risk reduction measures for some high-risk women.

Symptoms of ovarian cancer:

- Bloating, swelling of the stomach, and sudden weight gain
- Persistent pain/pressure in the pelvis or abdomen
- Trouble eating or feeling full quickly
- Feeling the urge to urinate urgently or often
- Unusual vaginal bleeding or pain during sex



These symptoms are common for some women and may not be indicative of ovarian cancer. See a doctor if these symptoms are new or persist consistently for more than two or three weeks.