



Ovarian Cancer: Know the Signs Approximately 21,000 U.S. women are diagnosed annually with ovarian cancer. This gynecological cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer death in women and causes more deaths than any cancer of the female reproductive system. September is the American Cancer Society’s National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.

Unfortunately, there is currently no effective test for ovarian cancer—the Pap test, a routine gynecological screening, only detects cervical cancer. That’s why it’s so important for women to recognize the symptoms and share their concerns with their doctors.

Who is most at risk?

All women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but age may be a risk factor. About 90 percent of women who get ovarian cancer are older than 40. Half of those diagnosed are age 63 and older.

There are additional risk factors, some of which are:

- Family history of cancer—especially ovarian, breast and colorectal cancers.
- Having an abnormality on the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, or a genetic mutation associated with a condition called Lynch syndrome
- Obesity
- Having a personal history of breast cancer

What are the symptoms?

Ovarian cancer may cause one or more of these:

- Vaginal bleeding (particularly post menopause) or abnormal vaginal discharge
- Pain or pressure in the pelvic or abdominal area

- Back pain
- Bloating
- Feeling full quickly while eating

How can women prevent getting it?

There is no known way to prevent ovarian cancer. But there may be a lower chance of developing it if a woman has:

- Used birth control pills for more than five years.
- Had a tubal ligation, both ovaries removed, or a hysterectomy.
- Given birth.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

If you’re a woman and notice any of the above-mentioned symptoms, talk to your doctor.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Cancer Society



NJWELL is an incentive-based wellness program offered to active employees and their covered spouses who participate in the SHBP/SEHBP. More detail can be found on <http://www.nj.gov/njwell/>.

Please Note: Preventive care services and screenings are only covered when rendered by an in-network doctor or other health care professional.

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