




ovarian
cancer community outreach, inc.
awareness.
support. hope.

What is ovarian cancer?

Ovarian cancer is a type of cancer that forms in tissues of the ovary. Most ovarian cancers are either ovarian epithelial cancers (cancer that begins in the cells on the surface of the ovary) or malignant germ cell tumors (cancer that begins in cells that produce the eggs). Ovarian cancer is rare – approximately 22,000 U.S. women will be diagnosed a year. But, unfortunately, it is the most deadly: about 14,000 of U.S. women fighting ovarian cancer die every year.

Like most cancers, ovarian cancer is not simple. Recent research indicates some “ovarian cancers” actually originate in the fallopian tube. Every person’s ovarian cancer is different. And every person’s treatment regime is different. What female reproductive organ the cancer started in and the stage at which it was diagnosed all play a part in the treatment protocol.



Ovarian cancer is rare, but
deadly – the lifetime risk of dying
from ovarian cancer is 1 in 100.

Ovarian cancer accounts
for approximately 3% of
cancers in women.



Risk Factors

Every woman is at risk for developing ovarian cancer, but for some individuals the risk is higher. Increasing age is a risk factor, with the median age of diagnosis of 63. However, ovarian cancer is discovered in women of all ages. Besides age, the following factors further increase a woman's risk: obesity, never giving birth to children, estrogen only hormone replacement therapy, and the biggest risk factor: a family history of breast, ovarian or colorectal cancer. Inheriting a mutation in either BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes also increases risk. However, only 10-18% of patients have this genetic predisposition, so having a BRCA mutation is not a prerequisite for developing ovarian cancer.

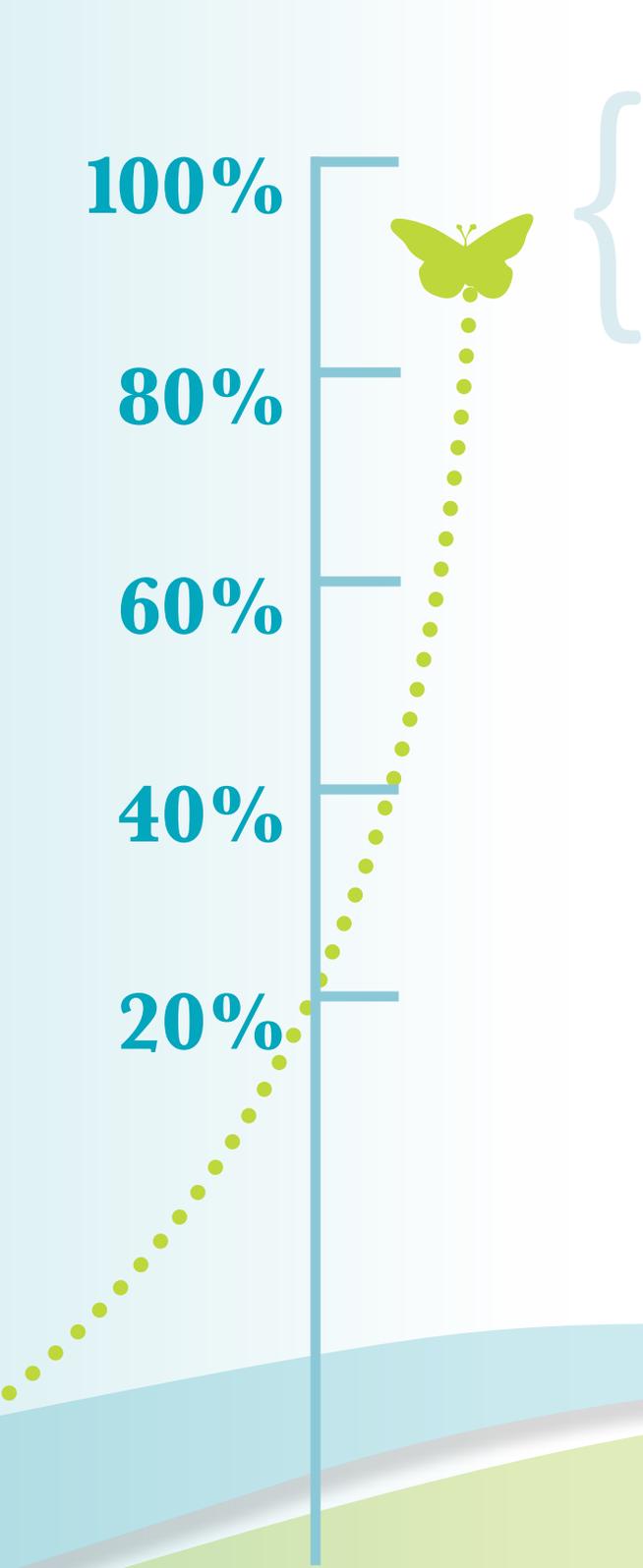
Risk factors mean just that: you are at risk. It does not mean you will develop cancer. But knowing you are at risk does mean you should be aware of the possibility and discuss any concerns you have with your physician.

Symptoms

Ovarian cancer is known as a silent killer because the signs and symptoms are subtle, and when they are realized the cancer is often advanced. Symptoms are usually persistent and change normal bodily feelings and functions. If you have one or more symptoms more than 12 times within one month and the symptoms are new or unusual, see a physician:

- Pain, swelling, or a feeling of pressure in the abdomen or pelvis
- Vaginal bleeding that is heavy or irregular, especially after menopause
- Vaginal discharge that is clear, white, or colored with blood
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- A lump in the pelvic area
- Gastrointestinal problems, such as gas, bloating, or constipation





100%

If ovarian cancer is detected & treated before it has spread outside the ovaries, the 5-year relative survival rate is 92.5%

80%

When to See a Physician

See a physician as soon as you have symptoms. Learning about your diagnosis and treatment plan helps you take an active role in your cancer care, and studies show those who are well informed usually have better outcomes and fewer side effects. Some people feel overwhelmed and don't want to know too many details. Share all your concerns with your doctor, and don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion.

60%

Your doctor should review the following procedures with you:

- Physical exam and health history discussion
- Pelvic exam
- Ultrasound exam, and possibly a transvaginal ultrasound
- CA 125 blood test – an increased CA 125 level can be a sign of cancer
- CT scan, PET scan MRI, and/or chest X-ray
- Biopsy

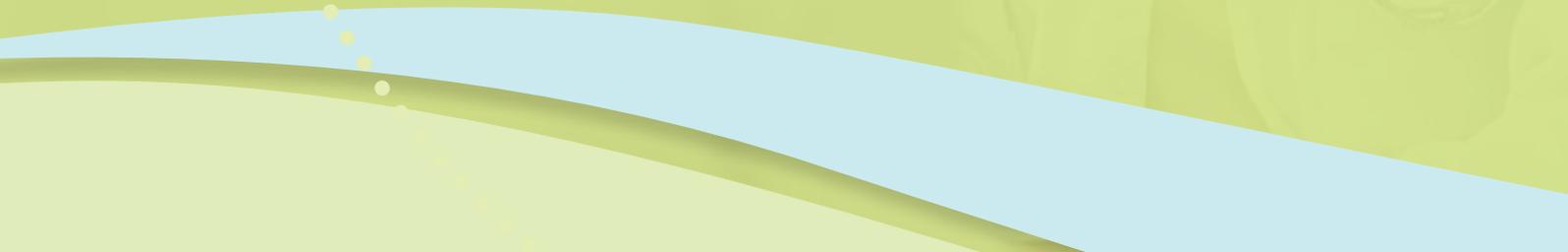
40%

As you go through testing and treatments, make sure to be an advocate for yourself. Listen to your body, physically, mentally and emotionally. Ask questions, explore options, and consider all approaches to eliminating the cancer.

20%



Over 22,000
U.S. women receive
a new diagnosis
of ovarian cancer
each year.



The Importance of a Gynecological Oncologist

A gynecologic oncologist is specifically trained in cancers of the female reproductive system. He or she is well versed with the intricacies of the surgery. In fact, gynecologic oncologists are five times more likely to completely remove ovarian tumors during surgery. And according to the Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance, having a gynecologic oncologist on your care team increases ovarian cancer survival rates by as much as 30%, as well as decreases rates of cancer recurrence.

Stages

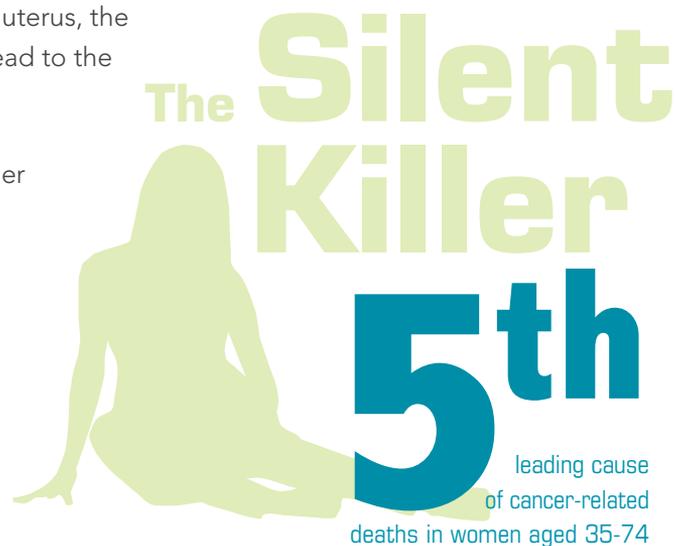
Like other cancers, ovarian cancer is defined in stages. The higher the stage, the more progressed the cancer. Most ovarian cancers that are not obviously widespread are staged at surgery. For the most accurate and complete stage determination, a gynecological oncologist should perform the surgery.

STAGE 1: Cancer confined to the ovaries or fallopian tube. It has not spread to organs and tissues in the abdomen or pelvis, lymph nodes, or to distant sites.

STAGE 2: Cancer is found in one or both ovaries or fallopian tubes and has spread to other organs in the pelvis such as the uterus, the bladder, the sigmoid colon or the rectum. It has not spread to the lymph nodes or distant sites.

STAGE 3: Cancer has spread outside the pelvis to other parts of the abdomen and/or to nearby lymph nodes.

STAGE 4: Cancer has spread beyond the abdomen to other parts of the body such as the spleen, the liver, the bones or the lungs.





Treatments

Just as each ovarian cancer diagnosis is unique, so is the treatment. There are three standard treatments:

SURGERY: Remove the tumor. Other organs in the reproductive tract may also be removed depending on the diagnosis.

CHEMOTHERAPY: Drug therapy to stop the growth of cancer cells. It is a treatment that also affects healthy cells.

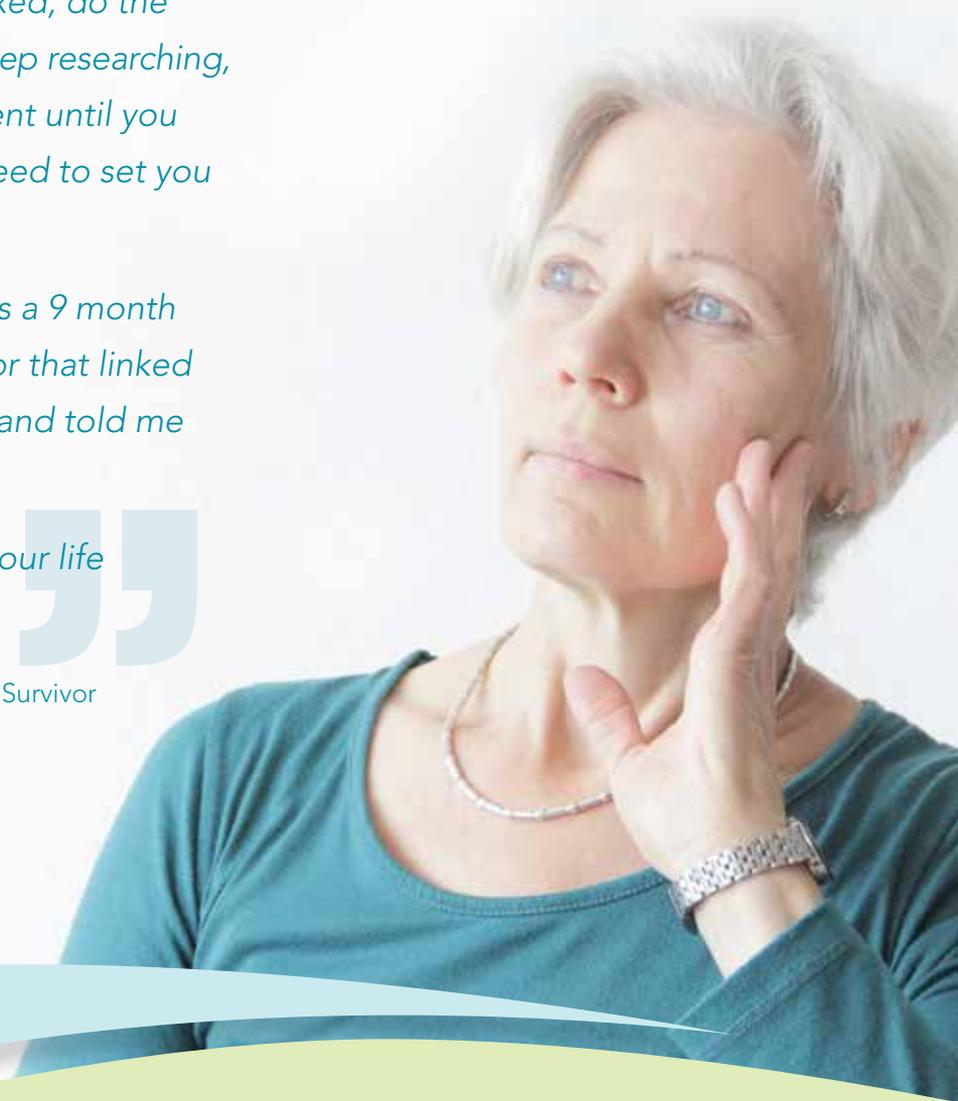
TARGETED THERAPY: Drug therapy that identifies and attacks specific cancer cells without harming non-cancerous cells.

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No one knows better than you, how you feel and whether it's normal or not. When you hear that annoying ticking in your car, you stay on it until the ticking is fixed; do the same thing for your health. Keep researching, keep learning and be persistent until you are given the attention you need to set you on the path to recovery.

I visited several doctors across a 9 month span before I found the doctor that linked all of my symptoms together and told me I had ovarian cancer.

Be persistent, be educated; your life could depend on it.”

— Tavia, Ovarian Cancer Survivor



Ovarian Cancer Community Outreach (OCCO)

A completely volunteer-run organization, Ovarian Cancer Community Outreach is a foundation that promotes awareness of ovarian cancer, provides financial support to women in treatment, and works to create funding for Regional Cancer Research Centers. Most importantly, it is a foundation that inspires Ovarian Cancer awareness, support and hope for those with ovarian cancer, as well as the people who love them.

To learn more about OCCO and opportunities to contribute please visit www.occo-wis.org

