



ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: OVARIAN CANCER



The American Cancer Society lists ovarian cancer as the 5th leading cause of cancer related deaths among women. Ovarian cancer is where cancerous cells are found inside an ovary, on the outer part of the ovary or near the ovaries. When an individual is found to have ovarian cancer in the earliest stages, there is a five-year survival rate of over 90 percent. However, this type of cancer often has non-specific symptoms and currently, there is no early detection test.

It is important to remember that all women are at risk for ovarian cancer. Some of the risk factors include:

- Genetic predisposition (family members have had ovarian cancer)
- Personal or family history of breast cancer or colon cancer
- Increasing age
- Infertility

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1 in 75 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer during their lifetimes.



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If you have one or more of these, there is an increased chance of developing ovarian cancer. But it is important to remember that increased risk does not mean a person will get the disease. A person with one or more risk factors should make sure they are watching for signs and symptoms.

There are some signs that may indicate ovarian cancer. If you have one or more of these for two weeks or longer, and they cannot be solved with rest, diet change, exercise etc., you should contact your healthcare provider. These signs and symptoms can include:

- Feeling bloated
- Pelvic pain
- Abdominal pain
- Trouble eating or feeling full quickly
- Feeling the need to urinate often
- Extreme fatigue
- Back pain

- Menstrual changes
- Upset stomach

Ovarian cancer is different from cervical cancer and cannot be detected with a Pap test. A Pap test looks for cervical cancer. Talk to your doctor about other screenings that may be available for you: pelvic exam, transvaginal sonography and CA-125 test. It is important to talk to your provider about the differences of these tests as well as the benefits and challenges they offer.

Ovarian cancer is a serious disease. It is important to know your risks, the signs and symptoms, and screening should they be needed.

SOURCE:

National Ovarian Cancer Coalition <http://www.ovarian.org>

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