

MINI LESSON OVARIAN CANCER

What Is Ovarian Cancer?

Ovarian cancer is cancer that starts in the ovaries. Ovaries are the reproductive organs in a woman.

What Are the Symptoms of Ovarian Cancer?

In the early stages there are often no symptoms or they are so vague that they are ignored. By the time the cancer is diagnosed, the tumor has often spread beyond the ovaries.

As the tumor grows, the woman may feel swollen or bloated, or may have general discomfort in the lower abdomen. She may have a loss of appetite or a feeling of fullness. Other symptoms may include, gas, indigestion, nausea and weight loss. A large tumor may press on nearby organs, such as bowel or bladder. This can cause diarrhea or constipation, or frequent urination. Less often, bleeding from the vagina is a symptom of ovarian cancer.

Risk Factors:

1. Family medical history (mother, sister, daughter)
2. Childbearing (never been pregnant more likely to develop)
3. Age (usually 55 and older)
4. Personal medical history (if had breast cancer)

Prevention:

Ovarian cancer when detected in its early stages has a more than 90% cure rate. Having a regular pelvic exam will increase the chance that, if ovarian cancer occurs, it will be found before the disease causes symptoms. Other ways of detecting ovarian cancer earlier are a CA-125 blood test, a CT scan or MRI of the abdomen, GI series, or ultrasound.

Treatment Methods:

Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

RESOURCES:

NAFCE Hearth Fire Series #16 "Woman to Woman . . . Body Talk"

<https://health.google.com/health/ref/Ovarian+cancer>

