

OVARIAN CANCER

What is ovarian cancer?

Ovarian cancer is the growth of malignant tumors on the ovaries. Several varieties of ovarian cancer have been identified, but most of them begin in the epithelial cells of these organs. The tumors may take a long time to become established, but once they do, some types may grow quickly and metastasize readily to the peritoneum and other organs in the abdomen.

Werner p.634

Who gets ovarian cancer?

Ovarian cancer can affect any woman of any age, but it is most common in women who are 60 years or older.

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What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms of ovarian cancer are generally extremely subtle until the disease has progressed to life-threatening levels. Early symptoms include a feeling of heaviness in the pelvis, vague abdominal discomfort, occasional vaginal bleeding, and weight gain or loss.

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How do you know if you've got ovarian cancer?

Some indication of ovarian cancer may be abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge, pelvic or abdominal pain, back pain, bloating; frequent urination, constipation, or diarrhea.

http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian/basic_info/symptoms.htm

How is ovarian cancer treated?

Ovarian cancer is generally treated with surgery and chemotherapy. Surgery removes the ovaries and often the uterine tubes and uterus as well.

Surgical "debulking" is removal of as much cancerous tissue as possible. This may involve

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on ovarian cancer. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns they may have. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of printing.

Last updated Aug 2012

removing parts of the large or small intestines or other structures. Chemotherapy can be administered orally at home or intravenously in a hospital.

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Are there any complications if it's not treated?

Although the numbers of women with this disease is low compared to those of other cancers, its mortality rate is high: ovarian cancer kills about 15,000 women every year and is the fifth leading cause of death by cancer in women in the United States.

Ovarian cancer is difficult to diagnose early. A pelvic examination may reveal unusual abdominal masses, but only a fourth of these turn out to be cancerous. Other tests that may be conducted include ultrasound tests conducted through the vagina, CT, and MRI.

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How can I avoid getting ovarian cancer?

There is no known way to prevent ovarian cancer but using birth control pills for more than five years, having had a tubal ligation (getting your tubes tied), both ovaries removed, or hysterectomy, and having given birth have shown to decrease the risk.

http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian/pdf/Ovarian_FS_0510.pdf