



# Facts about Ovarian Cancer

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## What You Should Know

- Ovarian cancer accounts for 3% of all cancers among women.<sup>1</sup>
- Ovarian cancer causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system, but mortality rates have been declining by about 1.7% per year since 2002.<sup>1</sup>
- The cancer may start as a cyst inside or around the ovaries. Most ovarian cysts disappear by themselves, but sometimes may develop into cancer.
- Some signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer include: bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, and urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency), however, early ovarian cancer has no obvious symptoms.
- Currently, there is no accurate screening test proven to be effective in the early detection of ovarian cancer. However, the combination of a thorough pelvic exam, transvaginal ultrasound, and a blood test for the tumor marker CA125 may be offered to women who are at high risk of ovarian cancer and to women who have persistent, unexplained symptoms.<sup>1</sup>
- Treatment includes surgery and usually chemotherapy. Typically, surgery involves removal of one or both ovaries and fallopian tubes (salpingo-oophorectomy) and the uterus (hysterectomy).

## Risk Factors

- Factors that increase a woman's risk for developing ovarian cancer include: older age, use of estrogen alone as a post-

menopausal hormone therapy, a personal history of breast cancer or a family history of breast or ovarian cancer, and heavier body weight.<sup>1</sup>

- Women who have inherited certain altered (mutated) genes (BRCA-1, BRCA-2) or those with hereditary nonpolyposis colon cancer (HNPCC) genes have an increased risk of developing ovarian cancer.<sup>1</sup>
- Factors that reduce a woman's risk for developing ovarian cancer include: pregnancy and long term use of oral contraceptives, hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) or tubal ligation (female sterilization).<sup>1</sup>

## Incidence and Mortality

- In 2007, 759 women were newly diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and 479 women died of the disease in 2008 in Michigan.<sup>3</sup>
- The American Cancer Society estimates that 21,990 women will be diagnosed and 15,460 women will die of ovarian cancer in the United States 2011.<sup>1</sup>
- Since the 1990s, ovarian cancer incidence and mortality rates have declined in Michigan, as well as nationally.
  - ✓ The incidence of ovarian cancer in Michigan has declined from 17.3 per 100,000 women in 1998 to 13.2 per 100,000 women in 2007.<sup>3</sup>
  - ✓ Nationally, ovarian cancer incidence rates declined from 14.3 per 100,000 in 1998 to 12.5 per 100,000 in 2007.<sup>2</sup>
  - ✓ Mortality rates associated with ovarian cancer have decreased slightly in Michigan from 9.6 deaths

- per 100,000 women in 1999 to 8.0 deaths per 100,000 women in 2008.<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ Nationally, ovarian cancer mortality rates have also declined slightly from 8.7 deaths per 100,000 women in 1998 to 8.2 deaths per 100,000 women in 2007.<sup>2</sup>
  - Michigan's ovarian cancer mortality rate ranks 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation.<sup>2</sup>
  - Both incidence and mortality rates for ovarian cancer are higher among Caucasian women when compared with African American women.<sup>5</sup>

### Stage at Diagnosis

- Of those diagnosed with ovarian cancer at the localized stage, 92.4% of women will survive at least five years. However, most cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed after the cancer has spread beyond the ovaries. The five-year survival rate decreases to 71.7% when detected at the regional stage (spread outside the ovaries to nearby organs, such as the bladder or uterus) and to 27.2% when detected at the distant stage (spread outside the ovaries to the lungs or liver).<sup>2</sup>
- During 2007, 17.9% of cases in Michigan were diagnosed at the localized stage, 19.9% of cases were diagnosed at the regional stage, and 52.8% were diagnosed at the distant stage.<sup>3</sup>

### Ovarian Cancer Behaviors:

- In 2009, 7.2 percent of Michigan adults reported having a family history of ovarian cancer.<sup>6</sup>
- 67.6 percent of Michigan adult women reported ever being asked by their health care provider about their family history of ovarian cancer in 2009.<sup>6</sup>

### References:

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