



What is Ovarian Cancer?

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Ovaries are about the size of an almond. They release eggs and the hormones that control menstruation. When ovarian cancer develops, it is usually in cells on the outside of the ovary. Cancer can also occur in the fallopian tubes, which transport eggs from the ovary to the uterus (womb).

Ovarian cancer is usually aggressive and the risk of this disease increases with age. It's rare in women younger than 40, but half of all ovarian cancers are found in women age 63 or older. Women who have never had a child, who have not taken birth control pills, or who were older than 35 when they had their first full-term pregnancy are also at higher risk. Additional risks

include a family history of ovarian and several other cancers. Some have asked whether talcum powder applied to the genital area is linked to ovarian cancer, but those findings have been mixed.

The most common symptoms of ovarian cancer are bloating and belly pain, trouble eating or feeling full quickly, and frequent urges to urinate. Other symptoms include pronounced fatigue, back pain and pain during sexual intercourse, constipation, and menstrual changes like heavier or irregular bleeding. Speak with your doctor if you experience these discomforts.

Radiation therapy, including therapy offered at RBOI, is sometimes used

to treat small, recurrent ovarian cancers. For advanced ovarian cancer, intraperitoneal radiation therapy (which uses radioactive liquid) is being studied in clinical trials.

Did You Know?

Ovarian cancer and a kind of breast cancer called triple negative have similar DNA. Thanks to a research tool called The Cancer Genome Atlas, we now know that these two difficult-to-treat cancer types may benefit from the same therapies.

What's New in Ovarian Cancer Research?

New research is exploring how damaged genes in ovarian/fallopian tube cancer cells can be corrected or replaced. According to the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), "Researchers are studying the use of specially designed viruses that carry normal genes into the core of cancer cells and then replace the defective genes with functional ones."

Clinical trials are also evaluating immunotherapy to treat ovarian/fallopian tube cancer. Researchers take a patient's immune cells, grow them in a lab, train them to attack the cancer cells, and then return them to the patient through an IV.

The FDA recently approved combining the non-chemo drug olaparib (brand name Lynparza) with the chemo drug bevacizumab to treat advanced ovarian cancer. Olaparib prevents damaged tumor cells from repairing themselves. Combined with bevacizumab, it delivers a one-two punch against ovarian cancer.

1.6%

Annual decrease in new ovarian cancer cases from 2007 to 2016

21,750

Estimated ovarian cancer diagnoses in 2020 in the US

5th

Ovarian cancer (in ovaries, fallopian tubes, and peritoneum) is the fifth most common cause of cancer-related death in the US

More than 2%

Decline in annual death rate



HBOC Syndrome: A Higher Risk

Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (HBOC) Syndrome relates to genetic mutations, especially in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. Those mutations can mean a higher risk of getting breast, ovarian, and additional cancers. For example, women with a BRCA1 gene mutation can have up to a 40% chance of getting ovarian cancer.

Risk factors include multiple HBOC Syndrome cancers on the same side of your family, one or more women diagnosed at age 45 or younger, a male relative diagnosed with breast cancer, and Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry. Talk to your doctor about getting genetically tested if you think you may be at risk.

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