



Western
Health

Ovarian Cancer

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Objectives:



You will learn more about:

- The facts on ovarian cancer.
- Risk factors.
- How it is detected and treated.
- Healthy life style practices.



Facts on Ovarian Cancer:

- In 2010 an estimated 2600 Canadian women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer and 1750 women will die.
- In NL 25 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer and estimated 30 women will die of ovarian cancer in 2010.
- In Canada 1 in 70 women will develop ovarian cancer in their lifetime.





Facts:

- Ovarian cancer remains difficult to detect.
- Currently there is no reliable screening test for ovarian cancer.
- It's considered one of the most serious forms of cancer due to the fact that it is not often diagnosed until invasion of pelvic organs.
- All women are at risk.



Risk Factors:



- No known causes.
- Aged 50 and older (rare in women under 30).
- Family history of ovarian or breast cancer.
- Having had cancer (e.g., breast, uterine, colon).
- Having never been pregnant.
- Obesity.
- Use of hormone replacement therapy for more than 5 years, especially if using estrogen only.

Some women with ovarian cancer do not have any of these risk factors.

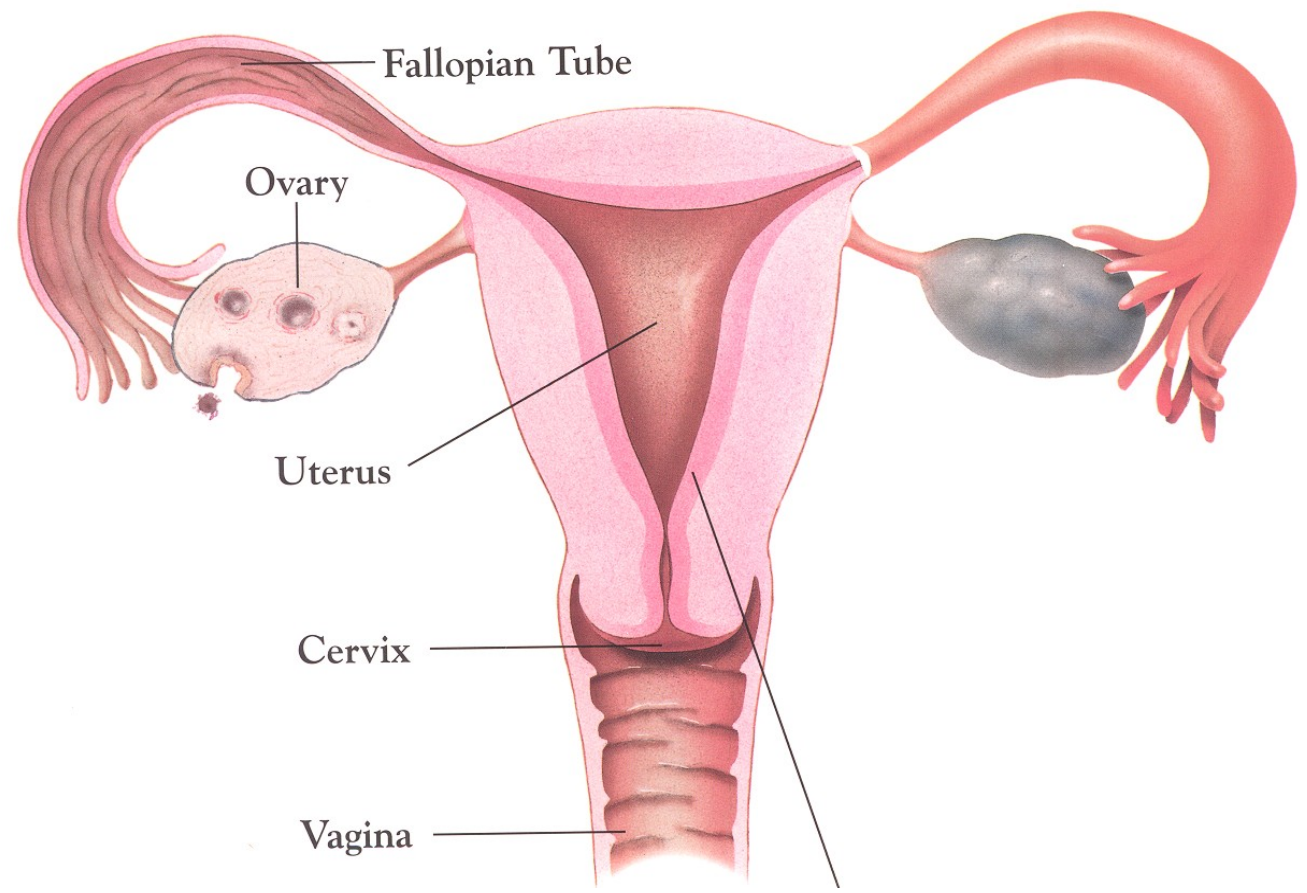
Evidence suggest:

- Women who used oral contraceptives have consistently been found to be at a lower risk.
- Breast feeding and pregnancy - having 1 or more children and breast feeding may decrease risk.
- Surgical prevention- women who are at higher should discuss options for tubal ligation, hysterectomy, oophorectomy.

What are the Ovaries?

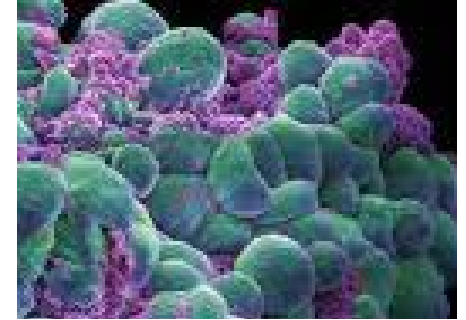
- The female reproductive organs which produce and release ovum or eggs every month.
- About the size and shape of two large almonds.
- Located in the pelvic area, one on either side of the uterus, below the fallopian tubes.
- During the monthly cycle they release estrogen which regulates female characteristics and stimulates development and maintenance of the uterus and vagina.

Female Reproductive Organs



What is Cancer?

- When abnormal cells grow out of control.
- When these cells grow large enough they form a mass called a tumor.
- Benign tumor – the tumor grows and enlarges at the site where it began.
- Malignant tumor – the tumor enlarges locally and invades and destroy the normal tissue around them and spreads to distal parts of the body.





Ovarian Cancer:

There are 3 types:

Epithelial - Develops from cells that line the surface of the ovaries (90%).

Germ cell - Develops from cells found in the ovary.

Stromal - Develops from cell which make up the ovarian structures

Symptoms:

Are not common in the early stages and when they do occur, the symptoms may be vague.

- Pelvic and gas or stomach distention.
- Abdominal discomfort, stomach upset, indigestion.
- Fatigue.
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding.
- Backache.
- Loss of appetite.
- Changes in bowel or bladder habits.
- Pain during sex.

Diagnosis:

- Doctor: physical exam.
- Diagnostic test are needed to confirm the disease and determine if it has spread.
 - Ultrasound.
 - X-rays.
 - CAT scans.
 - Blood test.





Treatment:

- Generally a combination of:
 - Surgery.
 - Chemotherapy.
 - Radiation.



Prognosis:

- The survival rates are much higher when diagnosed early.
- Factors include:
 - Age.
 - Cell type.
 - Grade.
 - Stage

Healthy Living:

- Be smoke free: avoid 2nd hand smoke.
- Choose a diet in lower fat, high fiber foods.
- Protect yourself/ family from the sun.
- Regular pap test, BSE, mammograms.
- Have regular doctor and dentists checkups.
- Be aware of of changes in your health.



Summary:

- The cause is still unknown.
- There are no proven methods to detect pre-cancerous lesions.
- Often diagnosed at a late stage.
- Ovarian cancer affects fewer women than either breast or lung cancer.
- Early detection is the best chance .

