Ovarian Cancer Symptoms Consensus Statement

Historically ovarian cancer was called the “silent killer” because symptoms were not thought to develop until the chance of cure was poor. However, recent studies have shown this term is untrue and that the following symptoms are much more likely to occur in women with ovarian cancer than women in the general population.\textsuperscript{1,2} These symptoms include:

- Bloating
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)

Women with ovarian cancer report that symptoms are persistent and represent a change from normal for their bodies. The frequency and/or number of such symptoms are key factors in the diagnosis of ovarian cancer.\textsuperscript{3} Several studies show that even early stage ovarian cancer can produce these symptoms.\textsuperscript{2-6}

Women who have these symptoms almost daily for more than a few weeks should see their doctor, preferably a gynecologist. Prompt medical evaluation may lead to detection at the earliest possible stage of the disease. Early stage diagnosis is associated with an improved prognosis.

Several other symptoms have been commonly reported by women with ovarian cancer.\textsuperscript{2-5} These symptoms include fatigue, indigestion, back pain, pain with intercourse, constipation and menstrual irregularities. However, these other symptoms are not as useful in identifying ovarian cancer because they are also found in equal frequency in women in the general population who do not have ovarian cancer.\textsuperscript{1}

References


4. Vine MF, Ness RB, Calingaert B, Schildkraut JM, Berchuck A. Types and duration of symptoms prior to diagnosis of invasive or borderline ovarian tumor. Gynecol Oncol 2001;83:466-71. Level III


**Originating Organizations:**
- Gynecologic Cancer Foundation
  - January 23, 2007
- Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
  - February 15, 2007
- American Cancer Society
  - April 30, 2007

**Endorsing Organizations:**
- CancerCare
  - May 29, 2007
- Conversations: The International Newsletter
  - For Those Fighting Ovarian Cancer
  - May 29, 2007
- EyesOnThePrize.org
  - June 1, 2007
- FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
  - May 29, 2007
- Gilda's Club Worldwide
  - May 29, 2007
- Gynecologic Oncology Group
  - May 29, 2007
- In My Sister's Care
  - June 5, 2007
- International Gynecologic Cancer Society
  - May 30, 2007
- Lynne Cohen Foundation for Ovarian Cancer Research
  - June 4, 2007
- National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
  - June 5, 2007
- National Cervical Cancer Coalition
  - May 30, 2007
- National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
  - May 31, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer Canada
  - June 4, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
  - May 29, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer Research Fund
  - May 29, 2007
- SHARE: Self-help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer
  - June 5, 2007
- Society of Gynecologic Nurse Oncologists
  - May 29, 2007

**Additional Endorsing Organizations**
- Alliance for Women’s Cancer Awareness
  - July 3, 2007
- Cancer Awareness Team, Akron, Ohio
  - July 20, 2007
- Marsha Rivkin Center for Ovarian Cancer Research
  - June 18, 2007
- Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance
  - June 20, 2007
- Oasis of Southern California
  - June 20, 2007
- Ovar’Coming Together
  - June 20, 2007
- Ovarian and Breast Cancer Alliance of Washington
  - June 20, 2007
- Ovarian Awareness of Kentucky
  - June 20, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer Alliance of FL
  - June 22, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer Alliance of FL – Gulf Coast
  - June 21, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer Alliance of FL/Space Coast
  - June 21, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer Alliance of Oregon and SW Washington
  - June 25, 2007
- Ovarian Cancer Orange County Alliance
  - June 28, 2007
- R.O.A.R! (Responsible Ovarian Awareness Required)
  - June 22, 2007
- R.O.C.C.S. Research for Ovarian Cancer and Continued Survival
  - June 20, 2007
- Sandy Rollman Ovarian Cancer Foundation, Inc
  - June 20, 2007
St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness  June 22, 2007
The Chicago Ovarian Cancer Alliance  June 25, 2007
The Ovarian and Gynecologic Cancer Coalition/Rhonda’s Club  June 25, 2007
Treasure Coast Ovarian Cancer Alliance  June 24, 2007
Tri-State Ovarian Cancer Alliance  June 20, 2007