



womenshealth.gov

1-800-994-9662

TDD: 1-888-220-5446

# Ovarian Cancer

**Q: What is ovarian cancer?**

**A:** Cancer is a disease in which certain body cells don't function right, divide very fast, and produce too much tissue that forms a tumor. Ovarian cancer is cancer in the ovaries, the female reproductive organs located in the pelvis. The ovaries make female hormones and store eggs that, if fertilized by sperm, can develop into a baby. Women have two ovaries, one on each side of the uterus. Tumors found in the ovaries may be non-cancerous tissue growths (cysts) or cancerous growths

that may spread to other parts of the body.

**Q: Why should I be concerned about ovarian cancer?**

**A:** About 1 in every 72 women in the United States will develop ovarian cancer. Most cases occur in women over the age of 50, but this disease can also affect younger women. Ovarian cancer causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system. The sooner ovarian cancer is found and treated, the better a woman's chance for recovery. But ovarian cancer is hard to detect early. Many times, women with ovarian cancer have no symptoms or just mild symptoms until the disease is in an advanced stage. Scientists are studying ways to detect ovarian cancer before symptoms develop. ■

## *For More Information*

To learn more about ovarian cancer, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/knowledge> or the National Cancer Institute web site <http://www.nci.nih.gov/cancerinfo/wyntk/ovary>.

You also can find out more about ovarian cancer by contacting the Womenshealth.gov Call Center at 1-800-994-9662 or the following organizations:

**National Cancer Institute**  
 Cancer Information Service  
 Phone: (800) 422-6237  
 Internet Address: <http://cis.nci.nih.gov>

**American Cancer Society**  
 Phone: (800)-ACS-2345  
 Internet Address: <http://www.cancer.org>

**Gynecologic Cancer Foundation**  
 Phone: (800) 444-4441  
 Internet Address: <http://www.wcn.org/gcf>

**National Ovarian Cancer Coalition**  
 Phone: (561) 393-0005  
 Internet Address: <http://www.ovarian.org>

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