

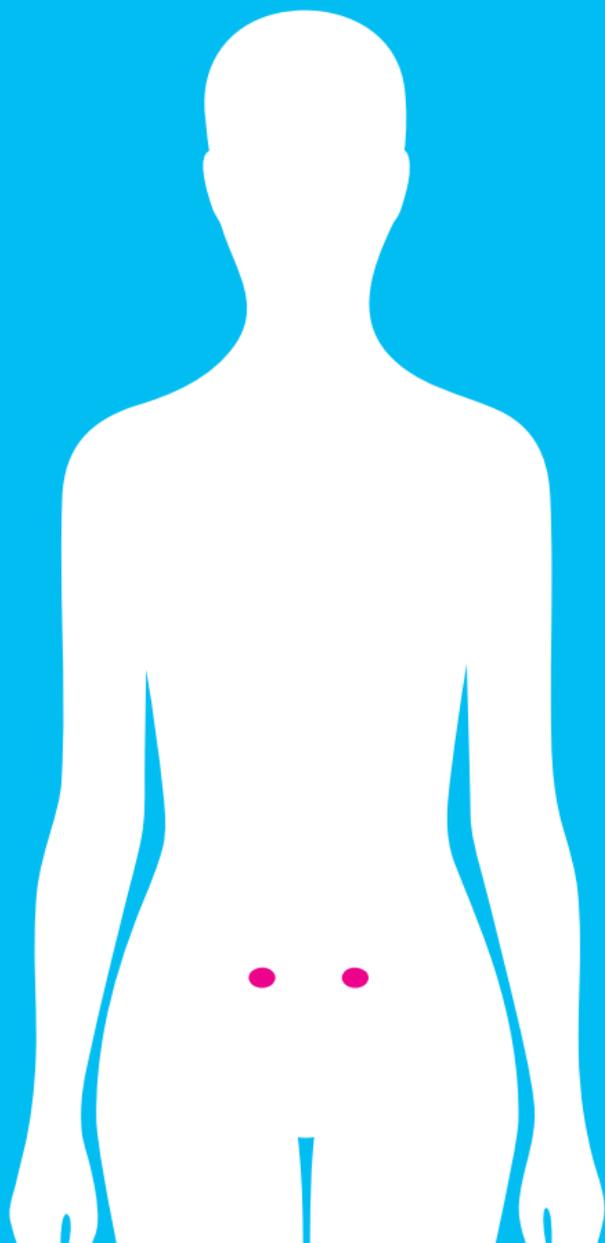
OVARIAN CANCER

How to spot the signs and symptoms
and reduce your risk

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CANCER
RESEARCH
UK



Ovarian cancer is the fifth most common cancer in women in the UK and is mainly diagnosed in women over 50.

When ovarian cancer is found at an early stage there is a higher chance of survival. Survival from ovarian cancer has almost doubled over the last 40 years.

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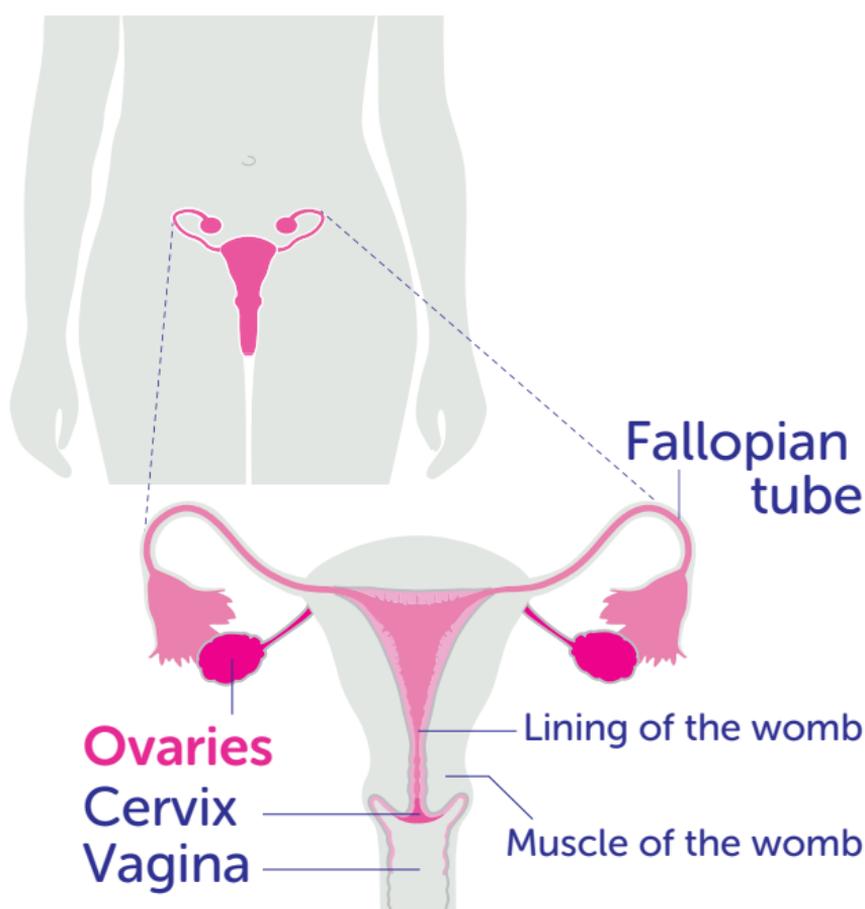
In this leaflet you can find out about:

- signs and symptoms to look out for
- what affects the risk of ovarian cancer.

The ovaries

The ovaries are part of the female reproductive system where the eggs are stored. They also produce hormones which control monthly menstrual cycles.

There is one on each side of a woman's lower tummy. Each is about the size and shape of an almond.



Spotting cancer early

Finding cancer at an early stage gives a better chance of being treated successfully.

Get to know your body and what's normal for you and if you spot any changes that are unusual or don't go away, go to your doctor.

What affects your risk?

- **Age**

As a woman gets older, her risk of developing ovarian cancer increases.

- **Hormones and having children**

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

increases the risk of ovarian cancer.

Oral contraceptives (or the Pill) can reduce the risk of ovarian (and womb cancer) both while you are taking it and for many years after you stop. But the Pill increases the risk of breast and cervical cancers, though this risk starts to go down after you stop taking it. If you are considering starting or stopping HRT or the Pill, or if you have any concerns, see your doctor.

Having more children and breastfeeding, can both lower the chances of developing ovarian cancer.

- **Endometriosis**

Women with endometriosis may have an increased risk of ovarian cancer.

- **Personal or family history**

Women with close relatives who have had ovarian or breast cancer may have an increased risk of ovarian cancer. Women who have had breast cancer themselves in the past are also at a higher risk. If you are worried about your risk, talk to your doctor.

What should I look out for?

If you have any of these signs or symptoms it is important to see your doctor:

- feeling full quickly, loss of appetite or both
- pain in the tummy or lower part of the tummy that doesn't go away
- increased tummy size or bloating
- irregular bleeding or bleeding after the menopause
- needing to pee urgently, more often than usual or both
- a lump in your tummy.

Other symptoms can include change in your normal bowel habit, extreme tiredness and/or unexplained weight loss.

They are all more likely to be something less serious but it's better to get checked out.

If you have already been to your doctor and things have got worse or have not gone away, your doctor will want you to go back and see them again.



**Early
diagnosis can
save lives**

Further information

You can find out more about cancer at www.cruk.org/about-cancer

Find out more about our health messages at www.cruk.org/health

For more about the signs and symptoms of cancer visit www.spotcancerearly.com

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our information nurses on freephone **0808 800 4040**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

All our leaflets are thoroughly researched and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. They are reviewed by independent experts and updated regularly. You can order our full range of leaflets free online at www.cruk.org/leaflets

About Cancer Research UK

We pioneer life-saving research to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. From our volunteers and supporters to our scientists, doctors and nurses, we're all here to save more lives and prevent, control and cure all cancers.

Together we will beat cancer sooner. If you would like to support our work, call **0300 123 1861** or visit our website www.cruk.org

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