

# *Know your O's*

How to screen yourself for Ovarian Cancer

*Managing your risk for ovarian cancer involves being aware of the signs, symptoms and monitoring those changes in your body. There isn't a screening test for ovarian cancer so the best thing you can do is know your body.*



## *Know your Risk*

There are a few things that can increase your risk of ovarian cancer:

- **Age** - Women over 50 have an increased risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Obesity** - Women with a BMI of 30 or more and those with a high fat diet are at higher risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Family history** - Incidence of breast or ovarian cancer in other women in your family increases your risk.
- **Your history** - If you have had breast cancer before, your risk for ovarian cancer is also increased.
- **Genetics** - If you carry BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations, you have a higher risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)** - If you have taken oestrogen-only HRT post menopause, your risk is increased.
- **Reproductive history** - Risk of ovarian cancer decreases with each full term pregnancy, especially if you have breast fed.
- **Birth control** - The use of oral contraceptives (The Pill) decreases your risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Surgery** - If you have had a tubal ligation (your tubes tied) or a hysterectomy your risk of ovarian cancer is decreased.

*“Trust your instincts. No one knows your body like you do.”*

## *Know your Body*

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You need to know your body and what is normal for you.  
It just takes simple things such as:

- Knowing how much food it takes for you to be full.
- How often you normally use the bathroom.
- What kind of vaginal discharge is normal for you.
- What a 'gassy' tummy feels like and how long it would normally last.

*If you have any questions or concerns always contact your GP.*

*If you're still concerned about a persistent symptoms get a second opinion.*



## *Know the Symptoms*

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There are lists of symptoms that are common to ovarian cancer.  
These usually occur suddenly and persistently get worse over time:

- Abdominal or pelvic pain.
- Difficulty eating, or filling more quickly than usual.
- Loss of appetite.
- Sudden or persistent bloating, this might feel like pressure from the inside
- Urinary abnormalities - using the bathroom more frequently or needing to go more urgently than usual.

“*If you have any questions or concerns always contact your GP.*”

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge.
- Persistent fatigue.
- Pain during intercourse.

These symptoms may seem hard to differentiate from other less serious problems (such as digestion issues or a urinary tract infection).

However, if you know your body and what kind of pain is normal, you will be able to identify when these kinds of symptoms are occurring in an unusual combination or are abnormally persistent.

**- If any of these symptoms occur in a way that is unusual for you, contact your GP as soon as possible. -**