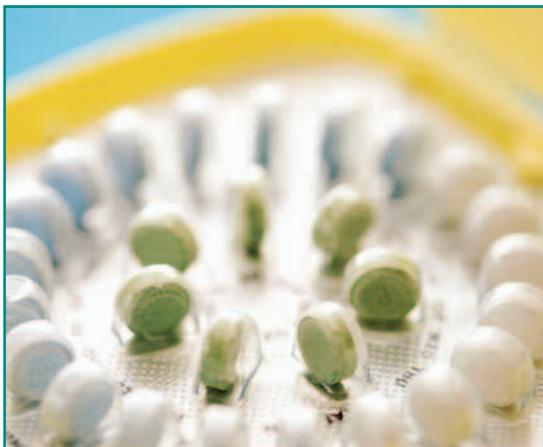




HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF OVARIAN CANCER

- **Oral Contraceptives (Birth Control Pills)** – Women who use birth control pills have been shown to have a lower risk of ovarian cancer than those who do not use birth control pills.
- **Pregnancy** – Having one child will decrease your risk of getting ovarian cancer.
- **Breastfeeding** – Breastfeeding a child for a year or longer will decrease your risk of getting ovarian cancer.
- **Tubal Ligation** – Studies have shown that women who underwent tubal ligation (“had their tubes tied”) had significant reductions in risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Removal of Ovaries** – Women at high risk may choose to have their ovaries removed to lower their risk of ovarian cancer.



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Canadian Cancer Society
 National Office:
 10 Alcorn Ave., Suite 200
 Toronto, Ontario M4N 3B1
 Phone: 416-961-7223
www.cancer.ca

National Ovarian Cancer Association
 National Office:
 101-145 Front St. E.
 Toronto, Ontario M5A 1E3
 Phone: 877-413-7970
www.ovariancanada.org

Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
www.ovariancanada.org

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov

The information found in this PROfile health brochure is of a general nature only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your pharmacist, physician, or other healthcare provider. If you have questions relating to your specific health concerns, please contact your personal healthcare provider.



Your PROfile Pharmacist has many resources for Ovarian cancer education and is always available to discuss your health concerns!

EXCLUSIVELY AT



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Ovarian Cancer





Ovarian cancer is the most serious type of gynaecologic cancer and the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths among Canadian women, with 1700 women dying of this disease each year. Approximately 2400 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer every year; however, if detected early, this disease can be treated with survival rates as high as 90%.

WHAT CAUSES OVARIAN CANCER?

An ovary is found on each side of the uterus. The ovaries produce eggs as well as the female sex hormones, estrogen and progesterone. Ovarian cancer occurs when cells found in the ovaries divide without control and produce an abnormal growth or tumor. The cause of ovarian cancer is unknown. However, there are circumstances that place women at higher risk of developing ovarian cancer. These risk factors are:

- **Age** - Ovarian cancer most often develops after menopause. Risk increases with age through to the late 70's.
- **Personal Cancer History** - If you have had cancer of the breast, uterus, or colon, you have an increased risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Family History** - You are at increased risk if you have a relative (especially mother, sister, or daughter) with ovarian, colorectal, uterine, or breast cancer.
- **Inherited Genes** - The most important risk factor for ovarian cancer is having a mutation of the breast cancer gene 1 (BRCA1) and breast cancer gene 2 (BRCA2). These genes are responsible for 5 to 10% of ovarian cancers. Women of Ashkenazi Jewish descent are at higher risk of having these genetic mutations.
- **Childbearing Status** - You are at increased risk of ovarian cancer if you have never been pregnant.
- **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)** - You are at increased risk of ovarian cancer if you have been taking HRT (especially estrogen-only therapy) for five or more years.

SYMPTOMS OF OVARIAN CANCER

Symptoms may not be present in the early stages of ovarian cancer. However, if you experience any of the

following symptoms for more than 2 to 3 weeks, you should contact your physician:

- Abdominal swelling, bloating, pain
- Increased frequency of urination
- Change in bowel habits (including constipation or diarrhea)
- Fatigue
- Upset stomach, gas, indigestion, nausea
- Lower back or leg pain
- Changes in menstruation, abnormal bleeding
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Weight gain or loss
- Loss of appetite.

DIAGNOSIS OF OVARIAN CANCER

Diagnosing ovarian is difficult because symptoms are often vague, can be confused with other diseases, and there is no reliable screening for early detection, like the pap test for cervical cancer.

The following tests may be performed by your physician if your symptoms suggest the presence of ovarian cancer:

- **Pelvic Examination** – The physician will examine the vagina, uterus, rectum and pelvis to look for masses or growth.
- **Transvaginal Ultrasound** – Uses sound waves to produce a picture of the vagina, uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries. Darker areas on the image may indicate cancerous growths.
- **CA 125 Blood Test** – CA 125 is a substance that is found on the surface of ovarian cancer cells and some normal cells. If CA 125 amounts are high in the blood, this may indicate that there is a higher risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Biopsy** – Cells are taken from tissue or fluid from the abdomen to determine if they are cancerous.
- **Chest-X Ray, CT (computerized tomography) scan, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)** – These tests will provide pictures of the body to see if the cancer has spread from the ovaries.



There are three types of treatment available:

- **Surgery** - In most cases, the surgery involves removal of ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, nearby lymph nodes, and abdominal tissue. If the cancer is caught early, younger women may elect to have only the affected ovary and fallopian tube removed to preserve fertility.
- **Chemotherapy** - After surgery, most patients are treated with certain drugs to ensure that all cancerous cells are killed. These drugs are usually injected into the vein and/or directly into the abdomen. Side effects may include nausea, vomiting, infection and abdominal pain.
- **Radiation** - A beam of radiation is aimed at the tumor in order to kill the cancer cells. In ovarian cancer, a radioactive fluid may be put into the abdomen through a tube. This does not have to be removed as it is radioactive for only a few days.

