

WHAT IS IT?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. When cancer starts in a woman's reproductive organs, it is called gynaecologic cancer. The five main types of gynaecologic cancer are: cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar. (A sixth type of gynaecologic cancer is the very rare fallopian tube cancer.)

Of all the gynaecologic cancers, only cervical cancer has screening tests that can detect this cancer early enough, when treatment can be most effective. Since there is no simple and reliable way to screen for any gynaecologic cancers except cervical cancer, it is especially important to recognize warning signs, and learn if there are things you can do to reduce your risk.

There are several ways to treat gynaecologic cancer. The treatment depends on the type of cancer and how far it has spread.

SYMPTOMS

It is important to pay attention to your body and know what is normal for you, so you can recognize the warning signs or symptoms of gynaecologic cancer

- If you have vaginal bleeding that is unusual for you, talk to a doctor right away. Any vaginal bleeding after menopause needs to be reported to your doctor. If you have not yet gone through menopause but notice that your periods are heavier, last longer than normal for you, or if you're having unusual bleeding between periods, talk to your doctor.
- You should also see a doctor if you have any other warning signs that last for two weeks or longer and are not normal for you. Symptoms may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know is to see a doctor.



Signs and symptoms are not the same for everyone, and each gynaecologic cancer has its signs and symptoms.

Below are the most common symptoms:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge is common in all gynaecologic cancers except vulvar cancer.
- Feeling full too quickly or having difficulty eating bloating, and abdominal or back pain is common for ovarian cancer.
- Pelvic pain or pressure is common for ovarian and uterine cancers.
- More frequent or urgent need to urinate and/or constipation are common for ovarian and vaginal cancers.
- Itching, burning, pain, or tenderness of the vulva, and changes in vulva colour or skin, such as a rash, sores, or warts, are found only in vulvar cancer.

If you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer, your doctor may recommend genetic counselling and testing. It is useful for a small percentage of women who have a family history of these cancers. It is not recommended for all women. Talk with your doctor if you believe that you are at increased risk for gynaecologic cancer. Ask what you might do to lower your risk and whether there are tests that you should have.

PREVENTION



• Do not smoke



• Eat a balanced diet



• Protect your skin from the sun



• Maintain a healthy weight



• Be physically active



• Attend screenings when invited



• Get enough vitamin D



• Make quality sleep a priority

Know your family medical history and get recommended cancer screenings

In partnership with



GYNAECOLOGICAL CANCERS



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