OVARIAN CANCER

Ovarian cancer occurs when cancerous cells develop in, near, or on the outer layer of one or both ovaries.

This rare, but aggressive disease ranks fifth in cancer deaths among women, accounting for more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system.

Signs and Symptoms
Pay attention to your body and know what is normal for you.

Ovarian cancer may cause one or more of these signs:

- Vaginal bleeding (particularly if you are past menopause) or discharge from your vagina that is not normal
- Pain or pressure in the pelvic or abdomen area
- Feeling full to quickly or difficulty eating
- A change in your bathroom habits such as more frequent or urge to urinate
- Back pain
- Bloating

Risk Factors
All women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but older women are more likely to get the disease.

Ovarian cancer often develops after menopause.

- Being overweight or obese
- Having children later or never having a full-term pregnancy
- Taking hormone therapy after menopause
- Having had or having a family history of ovarian cancer, breast cancer, or colorectal cancer
- Using fertility treatment
- Smoking
- Having endometriosis

Prevention

- Staying at a healthy weight or not taking hormone replacement therapy after menopause
- Oral contraceptives (birth control pills) for more than five years
- Gynecologic surgery: Having tubal litigation (tubes tied), ovaries removed, or hysterectomy (uterus is removed)
- If your family has a history of ovarian cancer, consider genetic counseling and testing

Statistics
According to a University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center study, Native Hawaiian women had a 36 percent higher risk for ovarian cancer than White women.

Among Asian ethnicities, Asian Indians/Pakistanis had the highest rate of ovarian cancer (Lee et al., 2019).

Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese women had significantly higher incidence rates of clear cell ovarian cancer.

(Observable from a University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center study)

Resources

- Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance: ocrahope.org
- National Ovarian Cancer Coalition: ovarian.org
- National Cancer Institute: cancer.gov
- American Cancer Society: cancer.org/cancer-information-in-other-languages.html
- Tmi Hale Native Hawaiian Cancer Network: imihale.org/education_materials.html#CancerScreening
- Asian American Health Initiative: aahiinfo.org/english/programs/progCancerInit.php#cprogram
- California State University, Fullerton: wincart.fullerton.edu/cancer_edu/index.htm

(Observation of a University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center study)