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ovarian cancer

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# Signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer



**Ovacome is a national charity providing support to those affected by ovarian cancer.**

**We give information about symptoms, diagnosis, treatments and research.**

Ovacome runs a telephone and email support line and works to raise awareness and give a voice to all those affected by ovarian cancer.

This booklet is part of a series giving clinical information about ovarian cancer.

It describes the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer and discussing these with your GP.



# Signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer affects approximately 7000 people each year in the UK.

It appears most often in those over 45 and after the menopause.

For most people there is no particular reason why the cancer occurs. However, a small number of ovarian cancers are caused by a faulty gene which runs in the family.

Ovarian cancer can be hard to diagnose because the symptoms can be similar to more common and less serious conditions. It is sometimes mistaken for irritable bowel syndrome although IBS rarely occurs for the first time in those aged over 50. A GP in an average size practice may see just one case of ovarian cancer every five years.

If your cancer is found at an early stage, treatment may be more successful with better results.

## The most common symptoms of ovarian cancer are:

- Persistent bloating of the abdomen.
- Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly.
- Persistent abdominal and pelvic pain.
- Changes in urination or bowel habit.

## Other symptoms can include:

- Extreme tiredness or fatigue.
- Backache.
- Vaginal bleeding.

You can use the Ovacome symptom diary at [www.ovacome.org.uk/symptoms-tracker](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/symptoms-tracker) to keep a record to show your doctor.

Ovarian cancer is uncommon. If you are experiencing these symptoms, they are new to you and you are worried, talk to your GP.

It is important to tell your doctor if you have close family members who have had breast, ovarian, prostate or pancreatic cancer because an inherited gene fault may be affecting your family.

Remember too that if you have had a cervical screening test for cervical cancer this will not detect ovarian cancer.

**If you would like more information on the sources and references for this booklet, please call us on 0800 008 7054.**

If you would like to discuss anything about ovarian cancer, please phone our support line on 0800 008 7054 Monday to Friday between 10am and 5pm.

You can also visit our website at [www.ovacome.org.uk](http://www.ovacome.org.uk).

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### Disclaimer

Ovacome booklets provide information and support. We make every effort to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information at the time of printing. The information we give is not a substitute for professional medical care. If you suspect you have cancer you should consult your doctor as quickly as possible. Ovacome cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy in linked sources.