

About Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian cancer is the leading cause of death from gynecologic cancers in the United States and is the fifth leading cause of cancer death among U.S. women. In the United States alone, there will be more than 22,000 new cases of ovarian cancer and 14,000 deaths in one year. The symptoms of ovarian cancer are often vague and subtle, making it difficult to diagnose. There is currently no effective screening test for ovarian cancer. Because of this, it is usually caught at a late stage. However, if ovarian cancer is detected and treated early on, the five-year survival rate is greater than 92%.

Knowing if you are at an increased risk to develop ovarian cancer can help with early detection of this silent killer. Genetic counseling and genetic testing can help identify if you are at an increased risk to develop ovarian cancer. Knowing your genetic risk can inform you and your doctor about future medical management options and can guide decisions regarding screenings, testing, and prevention.

Speak to a genetic counselor and gain knowledge about your body that may save your life.

What is Genetic Counseling?

Genetic counseling can help determine if a person or family has an increased risk for developing certain cancers, like ovarian cancer. Most cancers happen by chance, but some cancers are caused by an inherited genetic factor, a gene, that is passed down within a family. For example, the inherited genetic mutations in *BRCA1* /*BRCA 2* and Lynch Syndrome genes can lead to a significantly increased risk for ovarian cancer. A genetic counselor can evaluate the possibility of a hereditary cause for cancer in a family and provide individuals with personalized risk information.

What Can I Expect to Happen in a Genetic Counseling Appointment?

In a genetic counseling session you can expect a genetic counselor to review you and your family's medical history, help assess the likelihood of a hereditary cancer in your family, and review the best options for genetic testing. The genetic counselor will also discuss the implications of genetic test results, as well as options for cancer management that include screening and prevention.

Who Should Consider Genetic Counseling?

Consider Genetic Counseling and Testing if the following risk factors apply to you:

Risk Factors for Ovarian Cancer

- Increasing age, with highest occurrence in women over 50
- Personal or family history of ovarian, breast, endometrial, or colon cancer
- Uninterrupted ovulation (having no pregnancies, infertility, low parity)
- Presence of gene mutations, especially in *BRCA1*, *BRCA2*, or Lynch Syndrome genes
- Ashkenazi Jewish heritage with a personal and/or family history of breast or ovarian cancer

Risk Factors for other cancers

- Two or more persons on the same side of your family been diagnosed with cancer before age 50
- Two or more closely related people in your family had the same type of cancer
- Anyone in your family has had multiple primary cancers
- Anyone in your family has had rare or unusual types of cancer (like male breast cancer)

How Can Genetic Counseling Help Me Manage The Risk of Ovarian Cancer?

Cancer genetic counseling can provide individuals and their family members with current, individualized information about their cancer risks. The genetic counseling process helps patients make informed medical decisions and helps physicians track high risk families. Being aware of your risk factors and genetic risk is especially important for diseases such as ovarian cancer that are extremely hard to detect early. If you are identified (through genetic testing) to be at high risk of developing ovarian cancer, it may be appropriate to talk to your doctor about preventative measures, including increased surveillance methods, preventative drug therapies, and possibly preventive surgeries.

Can Genetic Testing Benefit Me if I Have Already Been Diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer?

Yes. Ovarian cancer is linked to the development of other cancers, such as breast, colon, or endometrial. Assessing your risk through genetic counseling can help you make decisions regarding your future health management options. In some cases, knowing your genetic risk may be helpful to doctors in developing and recommending personalized treatment options. Additionally, genetic counseling can also provide crucial information about cancer risks and screening recommendations for your family members who may also be at higher risk due to a mutation running in your family.

Will Insurance Pay for my Genetic Testing?

The genetic counselors will work with you and your insurance company to determine your out-of-pocket fee for genetic testing, should you decide to pursue it. The coverage for genetic testing varies based on your insurance company and personal and family history.

Tell Every Amazing Lady About Ovarian Cancer
Louisa M. McGregor Ovarian Cancer Foundation
also known as
T.E.A.L.

T.E.A.L.'s mission is to promote public awareness and education of the signs, symptoms and risk factors of Ovarian Cancer, while providing support to survivors and raising funds for research in order to find the cure for Ovarian Cancer. Teal is the national color that symbolizes Ovarian Cancer. T.E.A.L. founded the annual T.E.A.L. Walk and 5K Run for Ovarian Cancer, which is the largest Ovarian Cancer specific Walk in NYC. The T.E.A.L. Walk/Run takes place in September, which is national Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. T.E.A.L. also organizes other fundraising events and awareness programs throughout NYC and beyond. To learn more about T.E.A.L., visit www.tealwalk.org.



Signs and Symptoms of Ovarian Cancer

Most often these symptoms do not mean a person has ovarian cancer but if they are new symptoms and persist for 2 weeks or more, you should see your doctor.

- Vague but persistent and unexplained gastrointestinal complaints such as gas, nausea, and indigestion
- Abdominal bloating, pelvic and/or abdominal pain, and/or feeling of fullness
- Frequency and/or urgency of urination
- Unexplained change in bowel habits (constipation or diarrhea)
- Unexplained weight gain or loss
- Unusual fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- New and unexplained abnormal postmenopausal bleeding

Where can I go for Genetic Testing?

Many hospitals and clinics around the U.S. have genetic counselors on staff that you can call to make an appointment. If you are in New York City, you can visit the Maimonides Cancer Center in Brooklyn, NY. Maimonides offers the community a comprehensive approach to cancer prevention. The Genetics program is part of an interdisciplinary team that strives to teach the community about hereditary cancer, and supports individuals as they work with the staff to devise a personalized medical management plan.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact:

Flora Poleshchuk, MS, CGC, Genetic Counselor
Kayla Young, MS, CGC, Genetic Counselor
745 64th St Suite 199
Brooklyn NY
T: (718) 765-2547
F: (718) 765-2564



This pamphlet is brought to you by
Maimonides Cancer Center and Tell Every Amazing Lady
About Ovarian Cancer Louisa M. McGregor Ovarian Cancer
Foundation.



Ovarian Cancer and Genetic Testing

How Can Genetic Testing Help Me
Manage My Risk of Ovarian Cancer?



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