



An initiative of the ABIM Foundation



5 WAYS To Be Smart About Ovarian Cancer

- 1 Take steps to prevent ovarian cancer.** Keep a healthy weight and get regular exercise. Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables. Eat foods with omega-3 fats, such as salmon and sardines. Ask your doctor about taking oral contraceptives and getting enough vitamin D.
- 2 Know your risks.** Your risk is higher if you have a family history of breast, uterine, ovarian or colon cancer, or you have the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, or Lynch syndrome.
- 3 Know the symptoms of ovarian cancer.** The symptoms of ovarian cancer are listed below. See your doctor if the symptom lasts for two weeks or more.
- 4 Know when to get tested.** Testing might make sense if you have symptoms, or high risks, or your doctor sees something in an exam. Discuss the tests with your doctor. A blood test called CA-125 measures a protein found in ovarian cancer cells. An ultrasound test uses sound waves to look for cancer.
- 5 Know when NOT to get tested.** Avoid the tests if you don't have symptoms and your risk is low. The tests are not very accurate in women with no symptoms. The tests can cause false alarms, leading to unnecessary follow-up tests and procedures.

See your doctor if the symptom is new and lasts for a couple of weeks.

Symptoms to watch for:

- Pressure or pain in the abdomen, pelvis, or both
- Bloating or swelling in the abdomen
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Nausea, indigestion, gas, constipation, or diarrhea
- Feeling tired all the time
- Shortness of breath
- A need to urinate more often
- Unusual vaginal bleeding, such as heavy periods or bleeding after menopause

