



## HEALTH INFORMATION

# Ovarian Cancer

## What is Ovarian Cancer?

Ovarian cancer occurs when abnormal cells within the ovary start to divide uncontrollably. This growth forms a mass of abnormal cells within the ovary called a tumour. Tumours can be benign or cancerous.

Benign ovarian tumours do not spread to other parts of the body while cancerous ovarian tumours (ovarian cancers) can spread to nearby structures such as the uterus and fallopian tubes and if left unchecked can spread to other parts of the body such as the bowel, liver and lungs.

## Symptoms

- Persistent stomach pain
- Persistent bloating or increased stomach size
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Needing to wee more frequently

Occasionally other symptoms may include:

- Changes in bowel habits (diarrhoea or constipation)
- Fatigue
- Back pain

The key features of the symptoms of ovarian cancer are:

- Their persistence – they don't go away
- Their frequency – they occur on most days

- They are new – they started in the last 12 months
- They are unusual – they are not normal for you
- Similar to IBS - but ovarian cancer symptoms are distinctive because they are frequent and persistent whilst IBS symptoms come and go

## Treatment

There are three main types of treatment available; surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy-they are usually used in combinations rather than alone.

Which treatment a patient receives depends on the extent, type of cancer, how far it has spread and the general health of the patient.

No treatment combination is necessarily worse than any other so you should not panic if you have received a different treatment to someone with a similar stage and grade of cancer. It is important to discuss any concerns about your treatment with your oncologist who will be able to tell you everything you need to know regarding your treatment options and make recommendations based on your cancer.

## For more information

[www.ovarian.org.uk](http://www.ovarian.org.uk)