

10 Top Tips

Women's guide

This set of top tips has been developed to help give you confidence in talking to your GP about symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Worried about ovarian cancer? Helping you talk to your GP

1 Symptoms can include persistent bloating, stomach pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, and needing to wee more urgently or often than usual. You should go to your GP if any one of these symptoms is new for you, doesn't go away or happens more than 12 times a month.

2 Act early if you feel something is wrong. After all you know your own body better than anyone. Your GP is there to help you.

3 If friends or family notice you're unwell or have symptoms, don't dismiss their concerns. Make an appointment with your GP. You can always bring a friend or family member to support you at your appointment.

4 Keep a symptoms diary to track your symptoms. This can be very useful not only for you but also for your GP. You can download Target Ovarian Cancer's Symptoms Diary at targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptomsdiary or order it by contacting us.

5 Tell your surgery you are worried about cancer and need to be seen within a week. If this is not possible ask for a GP to ring you for advice.

6 You can book a double appointment with your GP if you need time to discuss more than one concern. You may also be able to book a telephone appointment if it is difficult to get to the surgery in person.

7 Before you see your GP, think about whether anyone else in your family has had ovarian or breast cancer on either your mother's or father's side. It might be helpful to ask relatives about this. If you do have a family history of either ovarian or breast cancer, make sure you tell your GP.

8 Help your GP as much as possible. Before your appointment write down anything you would like to discuss with your GP or any specific concerns you may have and take this with you to your appointment. If you are worried you might have ovarian cancer, tell your GP; they will be glad you've shared your concern.

9 Go back to see your GP if your symptoms don't improve within one month even if your tests and investigations are negative.

10 Smear tests screen for cervical abnormalities/changes only and will not help detect ovarian cancer. If you have any concerns about your symptoms you need to see your GP.

For more information on symptoms and the tests your GP should do, visit targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptoms or call Target Ovarian Cancer on 020 7923 5475.

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To access a list of references we used for this publication please call 020 7923 5475.