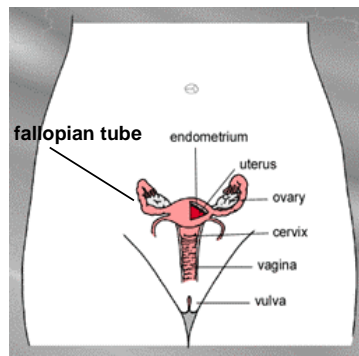


September is Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month

What is Gynecologic Cancer?

Gynecologic (female) cancer is the growth and spread of cancer cells in the cervix, ovaries, uterus, fallopian tubes, vagina, and vulva. These are also known as the reproductive organs.



What are the key statistics about gynecologic cancer?

The American Cancer Society estimated that 116,760 women in the United States will be diagnosed with cancers of the reproductive organs in 2021. Cancer of the endometrium, which is the lining of the uterus, is the most common gynecologic cancer. Ovarian cancer ranks fifth as a cause of cancer deaths among women and causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system. It is estimated that as many as 33,620 women will die in 2020 from gynecologic cancers.

Who's at risk for gynecologic cancer?

Any woman is at risk of developing gynecologic cancer.

Uterine or endometrial cancer risk factors include:

- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Menopause at a late age
- Use of certain medicines such as birth control pills, estrogen, and tamoxifen

Ovarian cancer risk factors include:

- Family history of ovarian cancer
- Increased age
- Reproductive history such as not having been pregnant, fertility treatment
- Hormone replacement
- Obesity
- Having had breast cancer

Cervical cancer risk factors include:

- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Smoking
- Early age of first intercourse
- A high number of sex partners
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

Vulvar cancer risk factors include:

- HPV
- Smoking
- Increased age
- HIV
- Vulvar intraepithelial neoplasia
- Lichen sclerosis (LSA)

Vaginal cancers risk factors include:

- HPV
- Smoking
- Increased age
- Diethylstilbestrol (DES)
- Vaginal adenosis
- Having had cervical cancer
- Alcohol
- HIV
- Vaginal irritation

What are the signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancer?

Uterine or Endometrial

- Vaginal bleeding in a woman who has gone through menopause
- Irregular vaginal bleeding in women before menopause

Ovarian

The initial symptoms of ovarian cancer are common complaints of a woman. This is why it may not be detected early. These symptoms include:

- Pressure or a feeling of fullness in the pelvis
- Abdominal bloating
- Filling full with small amount of food
- Indigestion
- Changes in your normal bowel or bladder patterns

Cervical

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding between periods
- Vaginal bleeding after sexual intercourse
- Vaginal discharge that has a foul smell, unusual color, or is more than usual.

Vulva

- Itching
- Burning, pain, or other discomfort
- A sore on the vulva
- Changes in skin color

What are the recommendations for early detection and screening?

Early detection refers to testing to find a disease such as cancer in people who do not have symptoms of that disease.

Uterine or Endometrial

At this time, there are no early detection tests recommended for women without symptoms.

The American Cancer Society recommends that women at increased risk (see risk factors above) see their doctor for routine yearly exam and whenever there is any abnormal uterine bleeding.

Ovarian

Tests such as a routine pelvic exam, ultrasound and CA 125 measurement (a blood test) may be performed if a woman is at high risk for ovarian cancer.

Cervical

If you are 21-29 years old: you should start getting Pap tests at age 21. If your test is normal, your doctor may tell you that you can wait three years till your next pap test.

If you are 30-65 years old: talk to your doctor about which testing option is right for you:

- A pap test only
- HPV test only
- HPV test along with a pap test (this is known as contesting)

Vulva

Having routine pelvic exams and being alert to any signs and symptoms of vulvar cancer greatly improves the chances of early detection and successful treatment. A lesion in the vulva that itches should be checked-up by your gynecologist.

Cancer Prevention Trials at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Prevention trials are research studies designed to answer important questions about the early detection and prevention of cancer. People who have certain health conditions may be able to participate in some of these trials. By finding and getting rid of abnormal cells, we may be able to prevent cancer. You can be part of our program to prevent cancer by participating in one of these trials. Participation in research studies *can* cure cancer!

If you would like further information about clinical trials for preventing cancer, please call Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey's Office of Human Research Services at 732-235-8675. For additional information about nationwide cancer prevention trials, you can call the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4 CANCER or visit their website at www.cancer.gov.

Where Can I Find Further Information?

The Resource and Learning Center

(732) 235-9639

www.cinj.org/rlc/

Provides reliable, relevant and current information about all aspects of cancer.

National Cancer Institute

1-800-4-CANCER

www.cancer.gov

The American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345

www.cancer.org

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

www.acog.org

Foundation for Women's Cancer

1-312-578-1439

www.foundationforwomenscancer.org



RLC website QR code.
Scan with smartphone / device.