OVARIAN CANCER BRIEF

Ovarian cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer deaths among women.

IN LOUISIANA

OVARIAN CANCER IS THE **5TH** LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG WOMEN IN LOUISIANA

WHAT TO KNOW

- **It is known to occur more frequently after menopause, developing primarily in older women over 60 years of age.** It is rare in women younger than 40.
- **Despite having slightly lower ovarian cancer incidence rates, Louisiana women face a higher risk of ovarian cancer death compared to the national average**, with a five-year survival rate of 44% for all patients in the state.

Unlike some other cancers, there are no recommended screening tests for ovarian cancer.

A pelvic exam may help to detect ovarian cancer, as physicians routinely check the ovaries during a pelvic exam. The physician may recommend a CT scan or transvaginal ultrasound if they suspect ovarian cancer.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and the American Cancer Society (ACS) do not recommend routine screening for ovarian cancer for women with an average risk. However, **women with a high risk of developing ovarian cancer, such as those with a family history of ovarian, breast, or colorectal cancer should consult with and maintain regular visits with their gynecological physician.**

HELPFUL TIPS

- Establish care with a gynecologic physician to maintain routine woman's visits.
- Talk to your physician about common signs/symptoms and family history of ovarian cancer to understand your own personal risk factors. Ask how to lower your risks for ovarian cancer.
- Maintain regular pelvic exams to detect disease before the onset. You might not have any symptoms. *A Pap test is NOT a screening for ovarian cancer; only for cervical cancer.*
- Pay attention to your body and seek medical advice if you experience persistent symptoms – abdominal pain, bloating, unexplained weight loss and changes in bowel habits, etc.
- Talk to your doctor about genetic testing, which is essential in identifying inherited mutations (like BRCA1 or BRCA2) that increase risk. Identifying a genetic mutation in one family member can inform other family members about their potential risk.

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