



Bloated tummy?

Tummy pain?

Needing to wee more?

Always feeling full?

## Worried about the symptoms of ovarian cancer?

## Ovarian cancer symptoms



**Persistent bloating**  
(not bloating that comes and goes)



**Feeling full quickly and/or loss of appetite**



**Pelvic or abdominal pain**  
(that's from your tummy to the top of your thighs)



**Urinary symptoms**  
(needing to wee more urgently or more often than usual)

### Occasionally there can be other symptoms:

- Changes in bowel habit (e.g. diarrhoea or constipation)
- Extreme fatigue (feeling very tired)
- Unplanned weight loss

Any unusual bleeding from the vagina before or after the menopause should always be investigated by a GP.

### Ovarian cancer symptoms are:

- **New** – they're not normal for you
- **Frequent** – they usually happen more than 12 times a month
- **Persistent** – they don't go away

## Worried about your symptoms?

If you regularly experience any one or more of these symptoms, which aren't normal for you, even if they're mild, it's important that you contact your GP. It's unlikely that your symptoms are caused by a serious problem (for example they could be caused by diet or lifestyle changes or the menopause) but it's important to be checked out just in case.

### Prepare for your GP appointment

- Track your symptoms using our free ovarian cancer Symptoms diary. Download or order it at [targetovariancancer.org.uk/guides](https://targetovariancancer.org.uk/guides)
- Find out about your family history. Tell your GP if two or more relatives in your close family have had cancer as it can run in families.

### What tests should your GP do?

- If your symptoms are frequent and persistent your GP should order a CA125 blood test. CA125 is produced by some ovarian cancer cells. A high level of CA125 in your blood could be a sign of ovarian cancer. But a raised CA125 level doesn't mean you definitely have cancer, as it can also be caused by other conditions such as endometriosis, fibroids and even pregnancy.
- They may also order ultrasound scans of your ovaries and tummy.

### What next?

- Ask your GP what the next steps are.
- Be persistent! Return to the GP or seek a second opinion within a couple of weeks if your symptoms don't go away. If you need some advice on talking to your GP about symptoms you can contact our support line on **020 7923 5475**



I felt a lump in my abdomen that quickly became extremely painful. A GP initially gave a diagnosis of constipation. I knew it wasn't, yet I didn't speak up! With a busy life, I also ignored how exhausted I felt.

My message to you is to know your body and to know your normal. If you have concerns, write down the symptoms and frequency so you can have an informed conversation with your GP. If you're concerned that you might have ovarian cancer, don't be afraid to tell your GP so they can arrange blood tests or scans. Be informed and speak up!"

**Catherine**

## Remember

▶ Cervical screening tests – sometimes known as smear tests – will NOT detect ovarian cancer. There is currently no screening test for ovarian cancer.

▶ Most cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed in women who have gone through the menopause. But if you're younger you can still get ovarian cancer.

▶ 1 in 50 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer in their lifetime.

▶ The sooner ovarian cancer is detected, the easier it is to treat. Survival can be up to 90 per cent for women in the UK diagnosed at the earliest stage.

▶ Other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) have symptoms similar to ovarian cancer but new cases of IBS are very unlikely in women over the age of 50.

▶ Anyone born with ovaries or fallopian tubes is at risk of developing ovarian cancer. This means most women and trans men, some non-binary people, and some people who have differences in sex development are at risk of ovarian cancer. If your ovaries and fallopian tubes have been removed you're at lower risk, but a small risk still remains.

## Contact us

Target Ovarian Cancer is the UK's leading ovarian cancer charity. We work to improve early diagnosis, fund life-saving research and provide much-needed support to anyone affected by ovarian cancer.

**If you're concerned about ovarian cancer and need more information or just want to chat, our specialist nurses are here.**

### Support line

Monday-Friday  
9am-5pm

**020 7923 5475**

Only  
**1 in 5**

women are able to name bloating as a potential symptom of ovarian cancer

Help us raise awareness by ordering and sharing copies of this leaflet (also available in other languages) from [targetovariancancer.org.uk/guides](https://targetovariancancer.org.uk/guides)

📞 Support line: 020 7923 5475

✉️ [info@targetovariancancer.org.uk](mailto:info@targetovariancancer.org.uk)

🌐 [targetovariancancer.org.uk](https://targetovariancancer.org.uk)

📘 TargetOvarianCancer

🐦 @TargetOvarian

📷 @targetovarian

© Target Ovarian Cancer  
This edition: November 2022 (v4)  
Next planned review: November 2025  
To access our list of references please contact us.  
Target Ovarian Cancer is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No. 6619981). Registered office: 30 Angel Gate, London EC1V 2PT. Registered charity numbers 1125038 (England and Wales) and SC042920 (Scotland).