

This leaflet has been written to help you understand about cancer of the ovary its diagnosis, treatment and support available. You may wish to discuss some aspects with your doctor or support nurse.

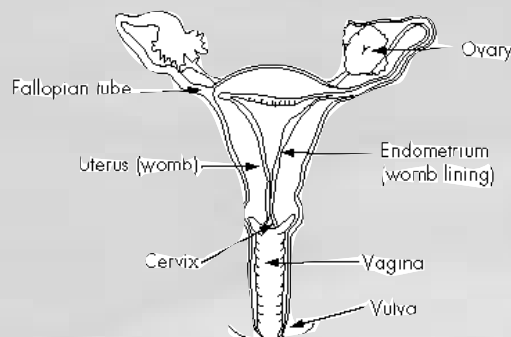
What is Cancer?

The organs of the body are made up of cells. Cancer is a disease of these cells. The cells normally divide in an orderly manner. Sometimes the cells divide out of control - developing into a lump/tumour. A tumour which is malignant consists of cancer cells which have the ability to spread beyond the original site, destroying surrounding tissue. Sometimes they can break away and spread to other parts of the body.

The Ovaries

The ovaries are two small oval shaped organs in the female pelvis. They form part of the female reproductive system. Each month, in women of childbearing age, an egg is released from the ovary and travels to the womb. If the egg is not fertilised by sperm it passes out of the womb and the lining of the womb sheds - this is a period.

The ovaries also produce the female hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. In the menopause these hormones decrease and periods gradually stop.



How does Cancer of the Ovary develop?

There are approximately 6900 new cases per year in the UK. (Cancer Research 2005)

We may not know the exact cause of your cancer, however, it is more common in women who have not had children. There is evidence to suggest that women who take the contraceptive pill are less likely to develop this sort of cancer. An inherited gene in the family causes a small percentage of ovarian cancers. It may be necessary to obtain a profile of your family to decide if a genetic referral is appropriate. Please ask your nurse specialist if you are concerned about this.

What are the signs & symptoms?

Unfortunately, most women with cancer of the ovary have vague symptoms only and the disease may be advanced before diagnosis is made. Some symptoms may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Vague indigestion, nausea, bloating

- Swelling of the abdomen
- Pain in the lower abdomen
- Vaginal bleeding - although this is rare.

These symptoms may also be due to other conditions - you should seek a medical opinion.

Diagnosing Cancer of the Ovary

A full medical history will be undertaken and a number of other tests may be carried out, before a definite diagnosis can be made. This may include a vaginal examination. Sometimes, the doctor may wish to examine your back passage.

The doctor may arrange a chest x-ray, blood test, including a tumour marker CA125 and a CT scan. All these investigations will be explained to you. See hospital information leaflets.

Stages of Cancer

Staging is a process of investigations which may be used to determine type/size of the tumour and if there is any spread. Staging is important to help decide treatment options.

Stages of Cancer of the Ovary

The following stages are used for cancer of the ovary:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage 1 | Cancer is limited to the ovaries. |
| Stage 2 | Cancer cells have spread to the pelvis. |
| Stage 3 | Cancer cells have spread outside the ovaries, and spread outside the pelvis. |
| Stage 4 | Cancer cells have spread beyond the pelvis to other parts of the body including the liver or lungs. |
| Recurrent Disease | Recurrent disease means that the cancer has come back (recurred) after it has been treated. |

Treatment options

There are two main treatment options for cancer of the ovary;

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy

The best option for you will be decided by your consultant following discussion with you.

Clinical Trials

Research into new methods of treating cancer of the ovary are going on all the time. You may be asked to consider taking part in a clinical trial.

Clinical trials are research studies involving patients which compare a different type of medical care with the best treatment currently available. You may be approached regarding a clinical trial which your consultant or specialist nurse

will be able to discuss with you. CancerBackup produce a booklet which may be helpful to you. The type of treatment will be decided by the consultant in discussion with yourself.

Surgery

Surgical treatment involves the removal of the uterus (womb), ovaries, cervix and the fallopian tubes; also removed will be a curtain of fat from the abdomen called the omentum. During the surgery the surgeon will examine the lymph nodes in the pelvis and will remove any that feel abnormal. This is called a Laparotomy - Total Abdominal Hysterectomy Bilateral Salpingo Oophorectomy, (TAH + BSO) and Infa-colic Omentectomy. To ensure the surgeon can operate effectively you will need to have a mid line incision. See hospital information leaflet for specific information.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy means drug treatment. In ovarian cancer it can be used to destroy or control cancer cells. The treatment is given in specialist units or a cancer centre and your nurse specialist will tell you where your treatment will be. The chemotherapy can be given before or after surgery and your management plan will be discussed with you before treatment begins. Chemotherapy may in some cases be given in tablet form. (See Catterbridge Centre for Oncology (CCO) booklet &

specific information sheets).

Life and Relationships

- Most people feel overwhelmed when they are told they have cancer.
- Many different emotions arise which can cause confusion and frequent changes of mood.
- Reactions differ from one person to another.
- There is no right or wrong way to feel.
- You may experience the whole range of personal emotions and reactions both similar or different from family and friends.
- Support and guidance is available in coping with these feelings.
- Many people find great comfort in their faith and or religious and spiritual beliefs.

Following the diagnosis of cancer and your subsequent treatment, you may experience physical changes. There may be some issues/concerns you wish to raise /explore, i.e.

- Body Image
- Sexual Health
- Menopause Symptoms
- Others

Your support nurse will be able to support you by explaining about the issue /concern and provide advice and information if required.

This may help you adjust / cope with

these changes. This may include involvement of other members of the Health Care Team (HCT) i.e.

- Dietician
- Social Worker
- Lymphoedema Practitioner
- Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and your Primary Health Care Team (PHCT), General Practitioner (GP), District Nurse (DN), Community Macmillan Nurse (CM)

You may not be aware of who can help with changes in social and financial matters, but your support nurse can put you in touch with the relevant people who can provide guidance and advice in these and other aspects, including childcare, how to tell the children and practical day to day issues i.e. Macmillan Social Worker.

You may wish to explore information and coping methods to help yourself. Therefore, the following booklets may be helpful, (there are many others):

- Adjusting to life after cancer - CancerBackup
- Close relationships & cancer - Cancerlink
- Life with cancer - Cancerlink
- Understanding Clinical trials - Cancerbacup

Complementary Therapies

Complementary therapies may be helpful to you and your family.

There are many different types i.e.

- Reflexology
- Massage
- Relaxation

and many others. Your support nurse can advise you by providing information regarding the appropriateness for you and how to access them.

Your Follow up Care

This will be tailored to your specific needs. The doctors will see you on a regular basis in the outpatient department (OPD). If you develop any further symptoms the doctor will see you promptly and may start further investigations. (See follow up leaflet for specific information).

Your Gynae Support Nurse / Clinical Nurse Specialist will also be able to offer you and your family advice, information and support, regarding your cancer, subsequent treatment and associated health issues.

Equal Opportunities

The hospital is committed to promoting an environment, which provides equal opportunities for all patients, visitors and staff. If you have special requirements such as dietary needs, interpreter services, disability needs or a preference for a female doctor, please do not hesitate to discuss this with a member of staff who will try to help you.

Support Networks Available Locally

Further information, advice and support is available for you/partner family from:
Knowsley
Lyndale Cancer Support Centre
Tel: 0151 489 3538

Sefton Cancer Support Group
Tel: 01704 876613
www.seftoncancersupport.org.uk

St Helens Cancer Support Group
Tel: 01965 632233/01744 884097

Warrington & District Cancer Self-Help Group
Tel: 01925 489540/01928 635925
07734 052576
www.cancerbackup.org.uk

Wirral Cancer Support Group
Tel: 0151 645 7824/0151 648 5604
www.cancerbackup.org.uk

The Wirral Holistic Therapeutic Cancer Centre
Tel: 0151 652 9213
www.wirralholistic.org.uk

Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support Group
Tel: 0151 423 5730
www.widnesruncornsg.org.uk

Isle of Man
Manx Cancer Help Association
Tel: 01624 579554

Liverpool
Liverpool Cancer Support
Tel: 0151 726 8934

National Resource Organisations for Gynae Oncology Patients

Cancer Backup
3 Bath Place, Rivington Street,
London EC2A 3JR
Tel: 0207 7392280
Freephone: 0800 800 1234
(Mon-Fri 9am-8pm)
www.cancerbackup.org.uk

National UK support organisation for all cancers, staffed by specialists providing information and counselling. They have recently compiled a fact sheet on Primary Peritoneal Cancer which can be requested by telephone and will be included in their website and in the Fact File next year. They also have a fact sheet on ascites.

The Daisy Chain Network

For additional information send an SAE to:
The Daisy Chain Network, PO Box 183,
Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6WZ
Email:
membership&media@daisynetwork.org.uk
www.daisynetwork.org.uk

The Daisy network is a premature menopause support group which offers advice, information and support for women throughout the UK.

Menopause Matters

www.menopause.co.uk

For accurate up to date information about the menopause and its treatment options "An easy to use, independent, clinician-led website".

Gynae C

1 Bollingbroke Road, Swindon SN2 2LB
Tel: 01793 491116
Email: Gynae C@yahoo.com
www.communicate.co.uk/wilts.gynaec

A support group/helpline run by Helen Jackson for women (and their family or friends) who have any gynaecological cancer.

Jo's Trust

Weedon Villa, Everdon, Northants
NN11 3BQ
Tel: 01327 341965 - Pamela's direct line but she is happy to speak to patients.
Email: Pamela@jotrust.co.uk
www.jotrust.co.uk

Established in June 1999 Jo's Trust is a registered charity dedicated to women and their families and friends affected by pre-cancer and cancer of the cervix. The trust's principal activity is the provision of good information, confidential medical advice and support about every aspect of this illness through its website.

Ovacom

Elizabeth Garret Anderson Hospital,
Huntley Street, London WC1E 6DH
Tel: 0207 3809589
www.ovacome.org.uk

A national Support Group for all those concerned with ovarian cancer. Has recently adopted a new corporate logo.

VACO

Vulva Awareness Campaign Organisation
Tel: 0161 747 5911
Email: vacouk@yahoo.com or
carolvaco2003@yahoo.com
www.vaco.co.uk

Help, support and friendly advice coordinated by a patient - Carol Jones.

Ask your support nurse for a free copy of *The Cancer Guide* which can guide, support and inform you through your cancer experience.

Personal contact

Name

Tel No

Support Nurse

Hospital Macmillan Nurse

District Nurse

Other

Questions you may wish to ask

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2

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References

Nordin A (1999) Patient Pictures - Gynaecology, Health Press Ltd, Oxford.

Blake P, Lambert H, Crawford R, (1998) Gynaecological Oncology: A guide to clinical management, Oxford University Press.

Cancer Research UK (2005).
www.cancerresearch.org.uk

National Cancer Institute. CancerNet (1999) Ovarian Cancer.

BBC/Macmillan Cancer Relief. The Cancer Guide (2005)

CancerBackup (2002) Understanding Cancer of the Ovary

CancerBackup (2002) Understanding Clinical Trials

Please note that Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke free site. Smoking is not allowed inside the hospital building or within the hospital grounds, car parks and gardens.

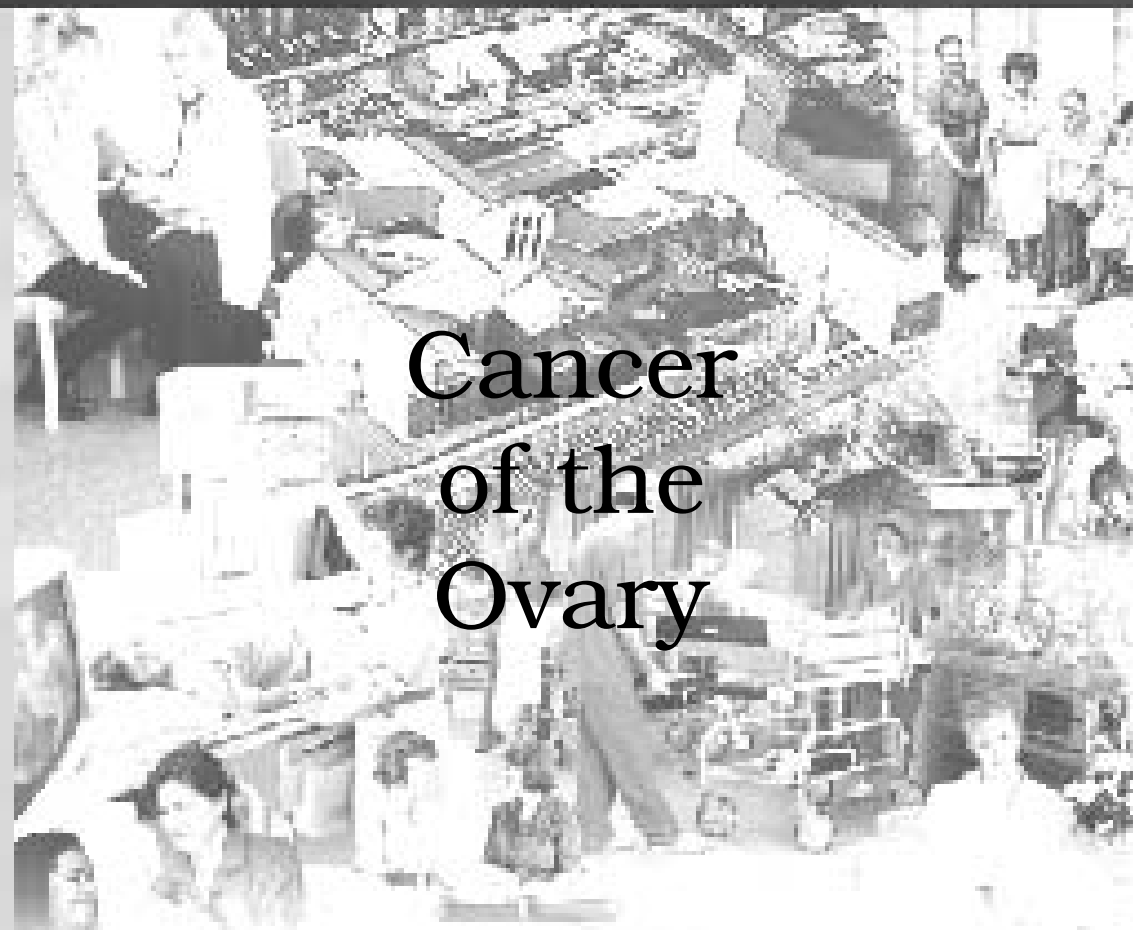
Staff are available to give advice about stopping smoking, please ask your Nurse about this.

Liverpool Women's NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Liverpool Women's Hospital
Crown Street, Liverpool L8 7SS

Telephone: 0151 708 9988
Visit our Web site at www.lwh.nhs.uk

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