

**8 Use of talcum powder** – Women who apply talcum powder to the genital area or sanitary napkins have an increased risk.

### What tests will I have to take to detect ovarian cancer?

Your physician will review your medical history and conduct a physical and pelvic exam to check for tumours, build-up of fluid, or changes in size of the ovaries or other surrounding organs.

Your doctor will order a blood test to check the level of certain substances, especially CA-125, which is found on the surface of ovarian cancer cells and some tissue. A high CA-125 level may indicate ovarian cancer.

You may also have to undergo a biopsy, where a tissue or fluid sample is removed using a surgical procedure from your pelvis or abdomen to be examined by a pathologist under a microscope. Surgery is usually needed to confirm the diagnosis. Additionally, you may be asked to have an ultrasound to show images of the ovarian tumour.

### What is the treatment for this type of cancer?

There are many types of treatment options for ovarian cancer:

Surgery and radiation therapy, using high-energy radiation rays to destroy cancer cells, are two options used to target a particular treatment area. In the case of surgery, the physician removes the

ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, surrounding lymph nodes, and even the omentum, which is the fatty tissue that covers the intestine. The aim is to remove as much of the cancer as possible if it has spread.

Chemotherapy, using anti-cancer drugs to eliminate cancer cells, is the other option. Most women undergo chemotherapy after surgery has been performed to remove as much of the cancer as possible.

### What can I do to prevent ovarian cancer?

Early detection in ovarian cancer is crucial. Make sure you have a yearly examination by your physician, especially if you have had a history of abdominal problems or family history of ovarian cancer. Implement a healthy diet and exercise regularly. Pregnancy and breast feeding are known to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer as well.

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## INFORMATION ON OVARIAN CANCER



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**Shaukat Khanum**  
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Ovarian cancer is the second most common cancer amongst women in Pakistan.

### What is ovarian cancer?

The ovaries are two small oval-shaped organs that are part of the female reproductive system. Located in the pelvis, one on each side of the uterus, the ovaries produce eggs and female hormones, which control the development of a women's body such as the breasts, body shape and body hair, as well as regulating a female's menstrual cycle and pregnancy.

Ovarian cancer develops when a fluid-filled cyst in the ovaries does not go away or increases in size. This type of cancer has the ability to spread to other nearby organs such as the uterus or the fallopian tubes, and through the lymphatic system throughout the abdomen, chest or pelvis or through the bloodstream to the liver or lungs.

### What are its symptoms?

Ovarian cancer is known as a silent killer, as most women experience no symptoms until the cancer has already spread to other organs.

The symptoms of ovarian cancer are vague may include abdominal or pelvic discomfort or pressure, abdominal swelling, back or leg pain, bloating, changes in bowel function or urinary frequency, gastrointestinal issues such as long-term stomach pain or indigestion, fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, a malnourished or sickly appearance, and unusual vaginal bleeding.

Other diseases may also lead to similar symptoms. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms you should schedule an appointment with your doctor as soon as possible to diagnose the problem and have it treated early.

### What are the risk factors associated with ovarian cancer?

The risk factors associated with skin cancer include:

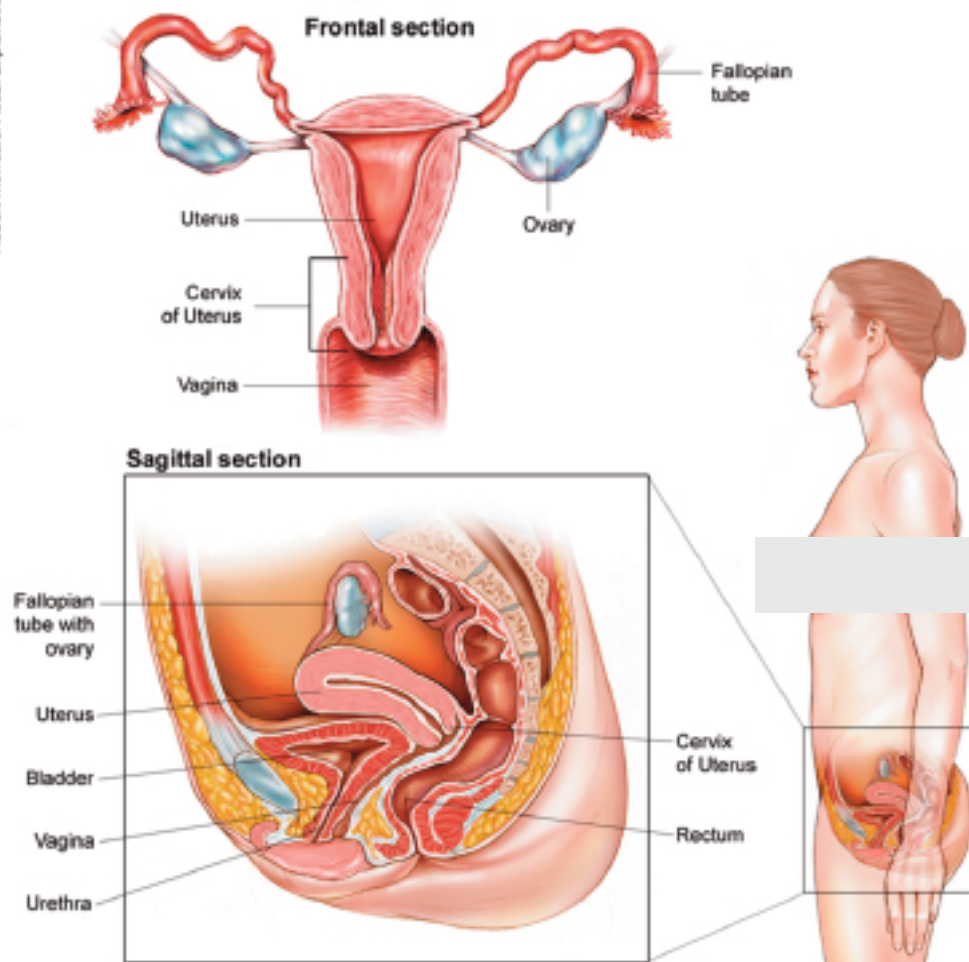
- 1 Family history** – If any of your close family members have had a history of cancer in female organs, you are more likely to develop it.
- 2 Age** – The incidence of ovarian cancer increases with age with over 50 per cent of all ovarian cancers occur in women older than age 65.
- 3 Menstrual history** – Those women who began to menstruate before age 12 and/or experienced menopause after age 50 are at a higher risk.
- 4 Infertility** – Ovarian cancer is more common in women who have not had children.

**5 Pregnancy history** – Multiple births and women who take birth control pills are 50 per cent less likely to get ovarian cancer.

**6 Diet** – A diet rich in meat and animal fats have been linked to development of ovarian cancer.

**7 Obesity**

Robert Nornes/Visual Explanations, LLC



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