

# 10 top tips

Worried about the symptoms of ovarian cancer?  
We help you talk to your GP.



- 1 Symptoms include:**
- ▶ persistent bloating (not bloating that comes and goes)
  - ▶ feeling full quickly and/or loss of appetite
  - ▶ pelvic or abdominal pain (from your tummy to the top of your thighs)
  - ▶ urinary symptoms (needing to wee more urgently or more often than usual).

Contact your GP surgery if you have any of these symptoms and they're new for you, don't go away or happen more than 12 times a month.

- 2 Other symptoms are:**
- ▶ changes in bowel habit (diarrhoea or constipation)
  - ▶ extreme fatigue (feeling very tired)
  - ▶ unexplained weight loss.

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

- 3 Tell your GP surgery you're worried about ovarian cancer** and need action as soon as possible. If you fill in an online form for an appointment, mention concerns about ovarian cancer in the form. Your surgery should order a CA125 blood test. A high level of CA125 in your blood could be a sign of ovarian cancer, but a raised CA125 doesn't mean you definitely have ovarian cancer. It can also be raised by other conditions. They may also order an ultrasound scan of your ovaries and tummy. Read about these tests at [targetovariancancer.org.uk/testing](https://targetovariancancer.org.uk/testing)

- 4 Keep a symptoms diary** to track your symptoms. This can be really useful for you and your GP. Download a symptoms diary at [targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptomsdiary](https://targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptomsdiary) or call **020 7923 5475** to order one.

- 5 Ovarian cancer can run in families.** If anyone in your family has had ovarian or breast

cancer, **on either your mother's or father's side**, tell your GP.

- 6 Give as much information as possible.** Write down anything you would like to discuss. If you would prefer to see a particular GP in person, ask for this. If this causes a delay, consider accepting the first appointment offered; you can always ask for a specific follow up.

- 7 Ask your GP surgery if they offer a longer appointment** if you need time to discuss more than one concern. If you have had a telephone appointment and symptoms continue, ask to be seen in person.

- 8 Cervical screening tests (smear tests) do NOT detect ovarian cancer.** All new symptoms should be discussed with your GP.

- 9 Conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) have similar symptoms to ovarian cancer**, but new cases of IBS are very unlikely in women over the

age of 50. If you have a change in bowel habit, tell your GP.

- 10 Keep going back to your GP if your symptoms don't improve**, even if you've had normal CA125 test results. For a small number of women with ovarian cancer their CA125 level stays within the normal range.

For more information on symptoms and the tests your GP should do, or if you're worried about ovarian cancer, visit [targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptoms](https://targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptoms) or call Target Ovarian Cancer's support line on **020 7923 5475**

- ▶ **Act early if you feel something is wrong. You know your body best.**

