

## Did you know?

- **7,000** women a year in the UK are diagnosed with ovarian cancer
- cervical screening tests – sometimes known as smear tests – will **not** help to detect ovarian cancer
- some of the symptoms of ovarian cancer are similar to those seen in more common conditions, like **IBS**, so GPs may find it hard to diagnose
- most cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed in women who have gone through 'the change of life' or menopause. But younger women can also get ovarian cancer

The sooner ovarian cancer is detected, the easier it is to treat. Survival can be up to 90% for women diagnosed with early ovarian cancer in the UK.

**Target Ovarian Cancer** and **Angels of Hope** are working to raise awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms across Northern Ireland with women like you.

 targetovariancancer

 angelsofhopeNI

 targetovarian

© Target Ovarian Cancer August 2012  
Reproduced by the Public Health Agency with permission from Target Ovarian Cancer July 2014

The original leaflet is available in other languages at [www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk)

## My Diary

My tummy is swollen. I had to buy a size 16 skirt yesterday. That's not normal for me. I had chicken curry last night, took a couple of bites and couldn't eat anymore. What's happening? Should I go to the doctor?

## Further information

You can find out more about ovarian cancer, including symptoms and tests, at:

### Target Ovarian Cancer

[www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7923 5475

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

### Angels of Hope

[www.angelsofhope.org.uk](http://www.angelsofhope.org.uk)

Telephone: 028 9024 1310

Email: [info@angelsofhope.org.uk](mailto:info@angelsofhope.org.uk)



Project supported by the PHA

Public Health Agency, 12–22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.  
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate) [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)

**swollen tummy?  
need to wee more?  
tummy pain?  
always feeling  
full?**



[www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk)

“I noticed that my tummy was swelling even though my appetite was not good. My symptoms were put down to stress at the time because I’d lost my dad and brother close together. I was first diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Later on I had a colonoscopy which came back negative. Finally I had a TVU (internal scan) which showed I had a large mass. That was a shock. I had no idea it could be ovarian cancer. I would advise any woman not to be worried about ‘bothering the doctor’. You know your body and when there’s something different or unusual get it checked.”



Lindy  
xxx

## Ovarian cancer symptoms

### Ovarian cancer symptoms are:

- frequent – they usually happen more than 12 times a month
- persistent – they don’t go away
- new – they are not normal for you and may have started in the last year
- **persistent pelvic or abdominal pain (that’s your tummy and below)**
- **increased abdominal size/persistent bloating – not bloating that comes and goes**

- **difficulty eating or feeling full quickly**
- **urinary symptoms (needing to wee more urgently or more often than usual)**

### Occasionally there are other symptoms:

- changes in bowel habit
- extreme fatigue (feeling very tired)
- unexplained weight loss

If you regularly experience any of these symptoms, which are not normal for you, it is important that you see your GP.

It is unlikely that your symptoms are caused by a serious problem, but it is important to be checked out.

## Worried about your symptoms?

**Be aware** note in your diary when you get a symptom.

**Talk** to your GP about symptoms that are new for you and come out of the blue. Tell your GP if **two** or more relatives in your close family have had ovarian or breast cancer.

**Return** if your symptoms don’t clear up, go back to your doctor or seek a second opinion,

even if you’ve had tests. Other conditions such as IBS have symptoms similar to ovarian cancer so take this leaflet to help explain what is happening to you.

### What tests might your GP do?

If you are having symptoms more than 12 times a month your GP should do a CA125 blood test. Depending upon the result they may order scans of your tummy and ovaries. One is an internal scan, but it’s quick and easy.