

### Get involved

GRACE is always looking for volunteers to help raise much needed funds so it can continue its work and help more women living with gynaecological cancers. Here are some of the ways you can help:

*Become a GRACE ambassador and tell your friends and family about our cause.*

*Host a fundraising event, such as a tea party, to raise funds for the charity.*

*Ask local businesses to make us their 'charitable partner'.*

*Take part in a local fun run or marathon.*

*Nominate us to local businesses with charitable giving schemes.*

*Donate your time and volunteer with GRACE.*



Get in touch by emailing us at:  
**support@grace-charity.org.uk**

or call us on: **01483 904153**

**www.grace-charity.org.uk**

### GRACE exists to support women living with gynaecological cancers.

Our focus is on raising vital awareness to promote early diagnosis; fund desperately needed research into their causes and treatments; provide local hospitals with vital surgical equipment; and to offer and facilitate support to women who are diagnosed. We are dedicated to improving the overall well-being, treatment, recovery, and survival rates of all women diagnosed, now and in the future.

Around 60 women a day in the UK, are given the lifechanging news they have gynaecological cancer (22,000 women a year).

### Help us give a lifeline to the women we love by donating today:



Or visit us online at **www.grace-charity.org.uk** to find out more.



@GraceWomen



Grace\_women

**Patron: Dame Judi Dench**

GRACE, Department of Gynaecological Oncology, The Royal Surrey County Hospital, Egerton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XX

# Information about Ovarian Cancer

Woman centred support | Research | Life-saving equipment



**Offering hope and support following a gynae cancer diagnosis**

# What is Ovarian Cancer?



Ovarian cancer is the second most common type of gynaecological cancer in the UK, after womb cancer. Each year, over 7,400 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. This type of cancer usually starts in the ovary or fallopian tube but can also begin as a rare condition called primary peritoneal cancer. It mostly affects women over 60 who have gone through menopause.

## Ovarian Cancer Can Be Known As:

- **Primary cancer:** Starts in the ovary, fallopian tube, or abdominal lining.
- **Secondary cancer:** Spreads from another part of the body (this is called metastasis).

The most common type is epithelial ovarian cancer, which comes from cells on the ovaries or fallopian tube surface. Less common types include:

- **Germ cell cancer:** Develops in egg-producing cells and is more common in teenagers.
- **Stromal cancer:** Develops in the cells that hold the ovary together.

## How Does it Develop?

Cancer occurs when cells grow and divide uncontrollably, forming a lump called a tumour. Ovarian cancer starts when the cells in the ovary mutate and grow abnormally. If left untreated, the cancer can spread to other parts of the abdomen and pelvis.

## Key Signs and Symptoms

Ovarian cancer is hard to detect early because the symptoms can be vague or mistaken for other conditions like IBS or PMS. Symptoms to watch for include:

- Persistent abdominal or pelvic pain.
- Feeling full quickly or difficulty eating.
- Persistent bloating or an increase in belly size.
- Changes in bowel habits not explained by diet or lifestyle.

### Other symptoms that might occur include:

- Back pain.
- Pain during or after sex.
- Needing to pass urine more often than usual.

## Risk Factors

The exact cause of ovarian cancer isn't fully understood, but certain factors can increase the risk:

- **Genetics:** Mutations in genes like BRCA1, BRCA2, RAD51C, and RAD51D raise the risk. A strong family history of ovarian, breast, womb, or bowel cancer may also increase the risk.
- **Age:** The risk is higher after menopause.
- **Reproductive factors:** Not having children (nulliparity) or using fertility treatments might increase the risk, but more research is needed.
- **Endometriosis:** This condition may slightly raise the risk of ovarian cancer.

### However, some factors reduce the risk, such as:

- Using the contraceptive pill.
- Being pregnant or breastfeeding.

## How is it Diagnosed?

To check for ovarian cancer, your GP may:

1. **Ask about symptoms** and family history.
2. **Feel your abdomen** for swelling or lumps.
3. **Perform an internal examination.**
4. **Order blood tests** and/or an ultrasound scan.
5. **If needed,** a CT scan and Blood test for CA125 would need to be performed.

## Treatment

Your treatment plan will be discussed by a team of experts, including surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, and specialist nurses.

### Treatment often includes:

1. **Surgery:** To remove the ovaries, fallopian tubes, womb, and any affected tissue. This is called debulking surgery if the cancer has spread.
2. **Chemotherapy:** To target and destroy cancer cells.
3. **Maintenance treatment:** Treatment that follows chemotherapy and surgery to maintain a remission, usually given in the form of a tablet or in combination with an infusion.

Your specialist will explain the surgery and any other treatments in detail.

## Support and Next Steps

If you're diagnosed with ovarian cancer, your care team will provide support and advice tailored to you. This might include help from specialist nurses, counsellors, or support groups. The GRACE charity also offers free one to one counselling and peer group support to any woman who has been diagnosed with a form of gynaecological cancer at any stage of their journey, from diagnosis through to life after recovery.

For more information, visit [www.grace-charity.org.uk](http://www.grace-charity.org.uk) or call **01483 904153**

For other information and support, visit:

- **Cancer Research UK**
- **Macmillan Cancer Support**

If you have concerns, contact your GP as soon as possible. Remember, early detection can make a big difference.

