Ovacome is a national charity providing advice and support to women with ovarian cancer. We give information about symptoms, diagnosis, treatments and research. Ovacome runs a telephone and email support line and works to raise awareness and give a voice to all those affected by ovarian cancer.

This fact sheet gives information for women who may be experiencing the symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer affects approximately 7000 women each year in the UK. It appears most often in women over 45 and after the menopause. For most women there is no particular reason why the cancer occurs. However, a small number of ovarian cancers are caused by a faulty gene which runs in the family.

Ovarian cancer can be hard to diagnose because the symptoms can be similar to more common and less serious conditions. It is sometimes mistaken for irritable bowel syndrome although IBS rarely occurs for the first time in women aged over 50. An average GP sees just one new case of ovarian cancer every five years.

If your cancer is found at an early stage, treatment may be more successful with better results.

The most common symptoms of ovarian cancer are:

- Persistent bloating of the abdomen.
- Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly.
- Persistent abdominal and pelvic pain.
- Needing to urinate more frequently.
Other symptoms can include:

- Changes in your bowel movements and frequency.
- Extreme tiredness or fatigue.
- Backache.
- Vaginal bleeding.

You can use the Ovacome symptom tracker on www.ovacome.org.uk to keep a record to show your doctor.

Ovarian cancer is uncommon. If you are experiencing these symptoms, they are new to you and you are worried, talk to your GP. Remember to tell your doctor if you have close family members who have had breast or ovarian cancer because an inherited gene fault could be affecting your family.

Remember too that if you have had a smear test for cervical cancer this will not detect ovarian cancer.

If you would like more information on the sources and references for this fact sheet, please call us on 0800 008 7054. If you would like to discuss anything about ovarian cancer, please phone our supportline on 0800 008 7054 Monday to Friday between 10am and 5pm.

You can also visit our website at www.ovacome.org.uk.

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Disclaimer
Ovacome fact sheets provide information and support. We make every effort to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information at the time of printing. The information we give is not a substitute for professional medical care. If you suspect you have cancer you should consult your doctor as quickly as possible. Ovacome cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy in linked sources.

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