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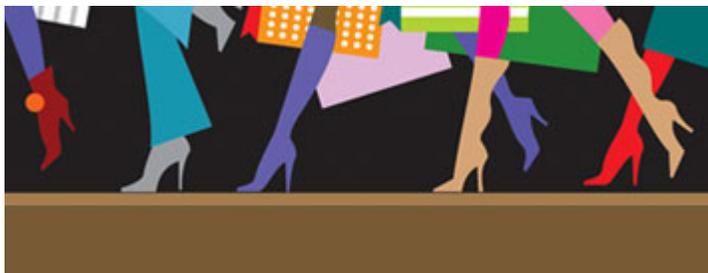
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# "Inside Knowledge" About Gynecologic Cancer

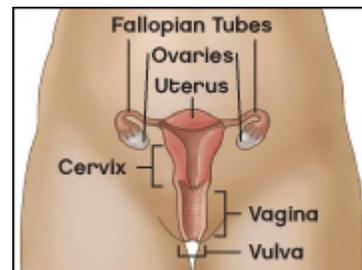


Get the facts about the signs, symptoms, and risk factors of gynecologic cancers. When gynecologic cancers are found early, treatment is most effective.

New resources are available from CDC to inform women about gynecologic cancer. Developed by the *Inside Knowledge: Get the Facts About Gynecologic*

Cancer campaign, they include—

- A [comprehensive brochure](#)  [PDF-3.5MB] about gynecologic cancer in general and fact sheets about the five main types of gynecologic cancer (cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar cancers).
- A [symptoms diary](#)  [PDF-503KB], including a symptoms matrix and a place for women to note symptoms that may be related to a gynecologic cancer.
- [Posters.](#)
- [Print public service announcements \(PSAs\).](#)
- [Radio PSAs.](#)
- [Television PSAs.](#)



## What Are Gynecologic Cancers?

Gynecologic cancers are cancers that start in a woman's reproductive organs. There are five main types of gynecologic cancer—

- Cervical cancer.
- Ovarian cancer.
- Uterine cancer.
- Vaginal cancer.
- Vulvar cancer.

Each gynecologic cancer is unique, with different signs, symptoms, risk factors (things that may increase your chance of getting a disease), and prevention strategies.

Learn more about each gynecologic cancer, including warning sign and risk factors—

- [Gynecologic Cancer](#)  [PDF - 3.5MB]
- [Cervical Cancer](#)  [PDF - 1.4MB]
- [Ovarian Cancer](#)  [PDF - 1.7MB]
- [Uterine Cancer](#)  [PDF - 2.2MB]
- [Vaginal and Vulvar Cancers](#)  [PDF - 1.5MB]

## Symptoms



There is no way to know for sure which women will get a gynecologic cancer. That's why it is important to pay attention to your body and know what is normal for you, so you can recognize the warning signs or symptoms of gynecologic cancer.

Each gynecologic cancer is unique, with different signs and symptoms, different risk factors (things that may increase your chance of getting a disease), and different prevention strategies. All women are at risk for gynecologic cancers, and risk increases with age. When gynecologic cancers are found early, treatment is most effective.

If you notice any unexplained signs or symptoms, talk to your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider right away. Symptoms may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know is to see a doctor.

Learn more about the [signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancer](#)  [PDF - 1.6MB].

## Prevention and Screening

Some gynecologic cancers are caused by [human papillomavirus \(HPV\)](#), a very common sexually transmitted infection. There is a [vaccine](#) that protects against the HPV types that most often cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers. It is recommended for 11- and 12-year-old girls. Ideally, girls should get three doses of this vaccine before their first sexual contact. It also can be given to girls and women who are 13–26 and did not get any or all of the shots when they were younger. If you or someone you care about is in this age range, talk with a doctor about it.

Of all the gynecologic cancers, only cervical cancer has a screening test—the Pap test—that can find this cancer early, when treatment can be most effective. The Pap test also helps prevent cervical cancer by finding precancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately.

In addition to the Pap test, which is the main screening test for cervical cancer, there is a test called the HPV test that looks for HPV infection. It may be used for screening women aged 30 years and older, or at any age for women who have unclear Pap test results. Learn more about the [Pap and HPV tests](#).

Since there is no simple and reliable way to screen for any gynecologic cancers except cervical cancer, it is especially important to recognize warning signs, and learn if there are things you can do to reduce your risk. Talk with your doctor if you believe that you are at increased risk for gynecologic cancer. Ask what you might do to lower your risk and whether there are tests that you should have.



**The Pap test only checks for cervical cancer. It does not check for ovarian, uterine, vaginal, or vulvar cancers.** There is no simple and reliable way to test for the other gynecologic cancers in women who do not have any signs or symptoms.

## Treatment

If your doctor says that you have a gynecologic cancer, ask to be referred to a gynecologic oncologist—a doctor who has been trained to treat cancers of a woman's reproductive system. This doctor will work with you to create a treatment plan.

### ***Inside Knowledge: Get the Facts About Gynecologic Cancer Campaign***

CDC, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health, established the [\*Inside Knowledge: Get the Facts About Gynecologic Cancer\*](#) campaign to raise awareness of the five main types of gynecologic cancer: cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar.

*Inside Knowledge* is an initiative that supports the Gynecologic Cancer Education and Awareness Act of 2005, or [Johanna's Law](#)  [\[PDF - 49KB\]](#), which was passed unanimously by the 109th Congress in 2006, and signed into law in 2007.

Developed and implemented by CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, the campaign—

- Provides information about gynecologic cancers.
- Produces and disseminates educational materials in English and Spanish.
- Educates women and health care providers about the signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancers, screening tests (if available), risk factors, and prevention strategies.