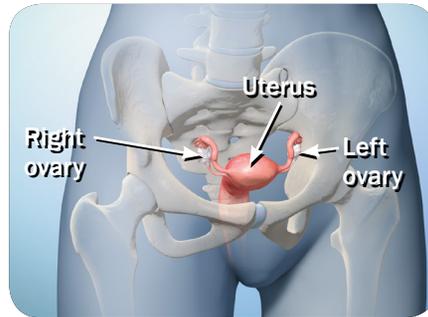


# Understanding Ovarian Cancer

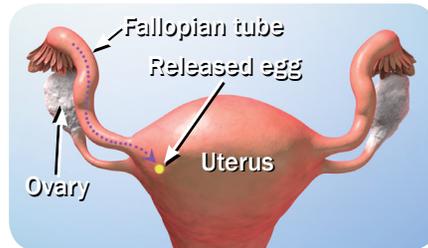
You or someone you care about has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. This video will help you understand the disease and how it may affect you.

## Normal Anatomy and Physiology of the Ovaries

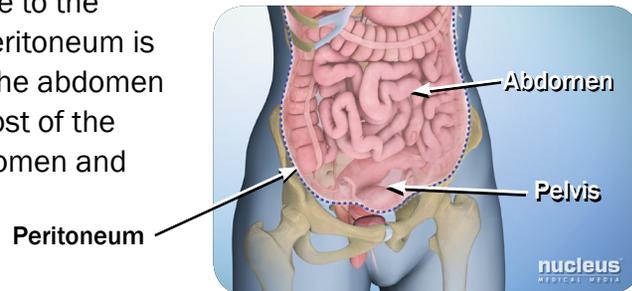
Women have two ovaries. They are on either side of the uterus. The ovaries are the part of the reproductive system that makes and stores eggs.



Ovaries also make the hormones estrogen and progesterone. The two fallopian tubes are attached to the uterus. After an egg is released from the ovary, it passes through one of the tubes to the uterus.

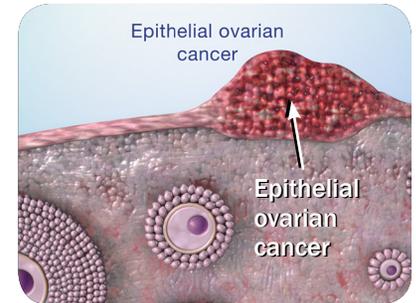


The ovaries lie close to the peritoneum. The peritoneum is the inner lining of the abdomen that also covers most of the organs in your abdomen and pelvis.



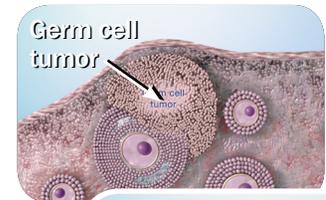
## Epithelial Ovarian Cancer

Most ovarian cancers begin in the outer layer of the ovary. This is called epithelial ovarian cancer. Cancer occurs when cells grow out of control. Abnormal cells continue to divide and may spread to other parts of the body.

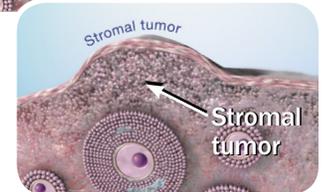


## Other Ovarian Cancers

Germ cell tumors are another type of ovarian cancer. They start in the cells that make eggs.



Stromal tumors are a third type. They begin in the supporting tissue of the ovaries, where hormones are made.



## Risk Factors for Epithelial Ovarian Cancer

A number of factors may raise your risk of epithelial ovarian cancer:

- **Age**, half of ovarian cancers happen in women age 63 or older
- **First baby after age 35**
- **Never had a baby**
- **Hormone therapy**
- **Obesity**, women with a body mass index of 30 or greater have a higher risk
- **Family history** of ovarian and certain other cancers

# Understanding Ovarian Cancer

## Symptoms of Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian cancer may have no early symptoms. When symptoms do appear, they may include:

- Pain in the pelvis or abdomen
- Gas or bloating,
- Irregular menstrual bleeding
- Feeling that you always need to urinate
- Constipation
- Back pain



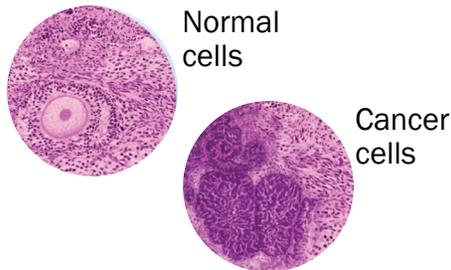
In most cases, these symptoms are caused by conditions that are not ovarian cancer.

## Planning Your Treatment

If you have ovarian cancer, your doctor will need to determine the grade and the stage, or progression, of the disease to help plan your treatment.

## Grading Ovarian Cancer

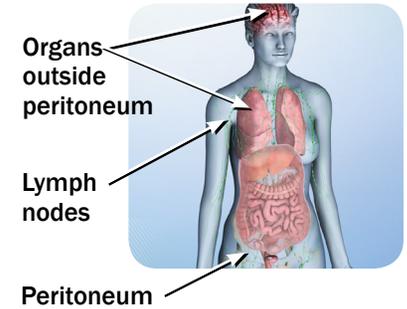
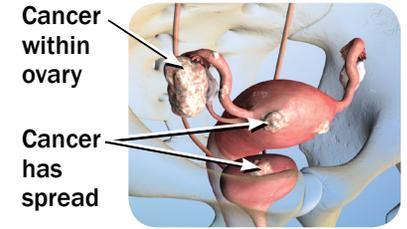
Each grade is based on how different the cancer cells look compared to normal ovary cells under a microscope. The higher the grade, the more aggressive the cancer is.



## Staging Ovarian Cancer

Each stage for ovarian cancer is based on how far cancer cells have spread from where they began:

- **Stage one:** cancer is only within the ovaries.
- **Stage two:** cancer has spread to other organs, but within the pelvis.
- **Stage three:** cancer has spread beyond the pelvis to either the peritoneum, the lymph nodes, or both.
- **Stage four:** cancer has spread to organs outside of the peritoneum.



As you deal with a diagnosis of ovarian cancer, continue to talk to your doctor and your cancer care team.

The information in this handout has been created and peer reviewed by graduate-level medical illustrators, followed by reviews from medical subject experts, either physicians or PhDs on the Nucleus Medical Review Board, to ensure medical accuracy and audience level appropriateness.

The handout is intended to supplement the information you receive from your healthcare provider and should never be considered personal medical advice. Always contact your healthcare provider with health questions and concerns.