

September

Healthy Solutions

Brought to by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield/ R. Kashmiry and Associates, Inc.

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Did You Know?

- Over 90,000 men, women, and children now need organ transplants
- 91% of Americans support organ donation, but only
- 34% know how to become a donor in their state

TITLE: Understanding Ovarian Cancer - the Basics

Ovarian cancer can occur at any age, even in childhood, but is most common after menopause. The disease accounts for about 22,000 new cases and 15,000 deaths in the U.S. annually.

During her childbearing years, a woman's ovaries deliver eggs to the uterus through the fallopian tubes. The ovaries are susceptible to several types of growths, which are often benign cysts but are sometimes cancerous. The cancer typically has no obvious symptoms until it is well advanced. Early growths can sometimes be detected during a routine pelvic exam.

If ovarian cancer could be readily diagnosed in its earliest stages, more women would be cured. But like many cancers, it usually has spread by the time it is diagnosed. The importance of early diagnosis is clear: About 90% of women live 5 years or more if ovarian cancer is detected early; the rate for all cases is only about 40%. Unfortunately only 25% of ovarian cancers are found at an early stage.

What Causes Ovarian Cancer?

Most women with ovarian cancer have no family history of the disease, yet a woman is more likely to get the disease if her mother or sister has had ovarian, breast, or uterine cancer; the more relatives affected, the greater the risk. Women who have had few or no children, who delay childbearing until their 30s, or who have trouble conceiving are also at greater risk for ovarian cancer. A link between the number of periods in a woman's life and the risk of ovarian cancer exists as well.

Some studies have also reported that long-time use of the fertility drug clomiphene citrate, especially if no pregnancy took place, may increase the risk of borderline ovarian tumors. This finding is not clear since infertility itself is a risk to ovarian cancer. Those who have several children, who breastfeed their infants, or who use birth control pills are at reduced risk. The difference may be linked to less frequent ovulation.

Most ovarian cancers occur after menopause, with half presenting over the age of 65.

A study from the American Cancer Society has found that the risk of death from ovarian cancer was higher in overweight women. Evidence suggests that the more saturated fat a woman eats, the greater her chance of ovarian cancer. Many high-fat foods contain estrogen and all stimulate natural estrogen production. Because most ovarian cancers grow more rapidly in the presence of estrogen, some experts believe that abnormally elevated estrogen in a woman's body promotes the onset of ovarian cancer. Exposure to asbestos is also believed to be a factor in some cases. This was a concern when some of the talcum powders used years ago contained asbestos.

Using postmenopausal hormones for more than 10 years may also slightly increase ovarian cancer risks, but these risks need to be discussed with health care providers and individually weighed.

Reviewed by Clarence Sarkodee-Adoo, MD on November 30, 2008
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October

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Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Did you know?

Even though male breast cancer is rare, there are things all men and women can do that might reduce their risk. Lower your risk by limiting your alcohol use, exercising regularly, and maintaining a healthy body weight.

TITLE: Breast Cancer Awareness

The entire month of October is dedicated to increasing awareness of the importance of early breast cancer detection. Anthem encourages women to take charge of their breast health by practicing self-exams, scheduling an annual mammogram, adhering to prescribed treatment and knowing the facts about recurrence.

Did you know women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) as part of a periodic health exam by a health professional, preferably every two to three years? After age 40, women should have a screening mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health.

Women who have a greater risk of breast cancer, including those with a first-degree relative with breast cancer, past personal history of cancer, or genetic factors, should have earlier baseline clinical screenings and more frequent clinical breast exams, as recommended by their doctor.

Although there is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, taking the right precautions and talking to your doctor may help reduce the risks. Even though breast cancer is more prevalent in women, the disease can also occur in men. The Susan G. Komen Foundation recommends asking your provider the following questions about breast cancer prevention:

- If you are age 20 or older and your provider does not perform a clinical breast exam, ask, "Would you perform a clinical breast exam, today?"
- "Is my mammogram scheduled at an FDA Certified Mammography Facility?" Note: You can also check this yourself at <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/mammography/certified.html>.
- If the results of a clinical breast exam or mammogram are suspicious, ask, "What follow-up tests do you recommend and what do they involve?"

For more information on reducing your risk or learning more about the disease, please see the [American Cancer Society Web site](#).

Additional information is also available from the [National Cancer Institute](#) and [Susan G. Komen Foundation](#).

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November

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American Diabetes Month

Did you know?

20.8 million children and adults in the U.S. have diabetes. It is estimated that 6.2 million of the 20.8 million are unaware that they have this disease. If you have diabetes, check your blood glucose every day and write the number in your records book. Follow the health eating plan that you and your doctor or dietitian have worked out. Be active a total 30 minutes most days. Ask your doctor what activities are best for you.

TITLE:

Are You At Risk For Developing Diabetes?

Your likelihood of developing Type 2 diabetes increases if you:

- Are overweight
- Are 45 years old or older
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- Are African American
- Are American Indian
- Are Asian American
- Are Hispanic American/Latino
- Are Pacific Islander
- Had gestational diabetes or gave birth to at least one baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- Have blood pressure of 140/90 or higher, or you have been told that you have high blood pressure
- Have HDL cholesterol that is 35 or lower, or triglyceride level that is 250 or higher
- Are fairly inactive, or you exercise fewer than three times a week

Talk to your doctor about your risks and what you can do to help prevent diabetes. For additional information, check out some of these resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/doc.do/id/0900f3ec802723eb>

American Diabetes Association - www.diabetes.org

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases - www.niddk.nih.gov

U.S. National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001214.htm>

Source: National Diabetes Education Program -http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/DPP_FactSheet.pdf

This information is intended for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health

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December

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National Hand washing Awareness Month

Did You Know?

Improving your time management skills and identifying your stress triggers can help you reduce the stress in your life. Practice relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga or other forms of exercise, and listen to soothing, relaxing music. Be sure to take a break and eat your lunch away from your desk.

TITLE: Techniques for Hand Washing with Soap and Water:

Proper techniques to use when washing your hands with soap and water:

1. Place your hands together under water (warm water if possible).
2. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds (with soap if possible). Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, backs of hands, fingers, and under the fingernails.
3. Clean the dirt from under your fingernails.
4. Rinse the soap from your hands.
5. Dry your hands completely with a clean towel if possible (this helps remove the germs). However, if towels are not available or if they are shared by many people, then it is acceptable to air dry your hands.
6. Pat your skin rather than rubbing to avoid chapping and cracking.
7. If you use a disposable towel, throw it in the trash so that no one else can get your germs.

Techniques for Hand Washing with Alcohol-Based Products

When hands are visibly soiled, they should be washed with soap and water when available.

However, if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based product for washing your hands. When using an alcohol-based hand rub, apply product to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry. Note that the volume needed to reduce the number of bacteria on hands varies by product.

Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of microorganisms on skin, are fast acting, and cause less skin irritation.

Handwashing in Emergency Situations

After an emergency, it can be difficult to find running water. However, it is still important to wash your hands to avoid illness. It is best to wash your hands with soap and water but when water isn't available, you can use alcohol-based products made for washing hands. Below are some tips for washing your hands with soap and water and with alcohol-based products.

When should you wash your hands?

1. Before preparing or eating food.
2. After going to the bathroom.
3. After cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom.
4. When tending to someone who is sick.
5. After handling uncooked foods, particularly raw meat, poultry, or fish.
6. After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
7. After handling an animal or animal waste.
8. After handling garbage.
9. When treating a cut or wound.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention This information is intended for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health.

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