

Ovarian Cancer

Ovaries are glands that produce eggs for reproduction. Ovarian cancer begins in the ovaries or in the cells of the fallopian tubes. Early ovarian cancer often causes few or no symptoms, making early detection challenging and emphasizing the importance of risk reduction.

Statistics

- In 2026, an estimated 21,010 new cases of ovarian cancer will be diagnosed in the United States.
- An estimated 12,450 women will die from ovarian cancer in 2026.
- Ovarian cancer is the most fatal gynecologic cancer. The overall five-year survival rate for ovarian cancer is 52%, but it improves to 92% for people diagnosed with early-stage disease.

Risk Factors

Ovarian cancer is not completely preventable, but certain risk factors can increase a person's risk of developing the disease:

- **Older Age:** Long-term exposure to ovulation-related inflammation may increase a person's risk of ovarian cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, half of all ovarian cancers are found in women over 63.
- **Family History of Breast or Ovarian Cancer:** Having a family history of breast or ovarian cancer increases ovarian cancer risk, as these cancers are often linked to inherited genetic mutations, most commonly BRCA1 and BRCA2.
- **Endometriosis:** Women with endometriosis have four times greater risk of developing ovarian cancer compared to those without endometriosis.

Symptoms

Early-stage ovarian cancer may cause no symptoms; however, some women may experience persistent, nonspecific symptoms, such as:

- Back pain
- Bloating
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Frequent or urgent urination

Prevention

While there is no sure way to prevent ovarian cancer, as it has many causes, there are some steps you can take to lower your risk:

- **Surgery:** People at high risk for ovarian cancer, such as those with BRCA1/BCRA2 gene mutations, may choose to have their ovaries and fallopian tubes removed via surgery.
- **Using an intrauterine device (IUD):** Some studies suggest that use of copper or hormonal IUDs may be associated with a reduced risk of ovarian cancer, possibly due to local hormonal effects and/or immune responses.
- **Taking birth control medication:** Use of hormonal birth control pills reduces the risk of ovarian cancer. This protective effect increases the longer they are used.
- **Breastfeeding:** Women who breastfeed have a reduced risk of developing ovarian cancer.

Treatment Options

Depending on the disease stage and type and the tumor's size and location, ovarian cancer may be treated with one or a combination of the following:

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Targeted therapy
- Hormone therapy
- Immunotherapy
- Radiation therapy, though it is not used routinely

About Texas Oncology

Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology is an independent, physician-led practice and a member of the US Oncology Network. With more than 550 physicians and 300 locations across Texas, Texas Oncology serves over 250,000 cancer patients each year.

Texas Oncology provides advanced care across 19 specialties and offers a comprehensive clinical trials and research program that has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).