

31 Facts for 31 Days



- 1 Ovarian cancer is the most lethal gynaecological cancer.
- 2 There is no early detection test for ovarian cancer.
- 3 Every 8 hours, an Australian woman dies from ovarian cancer.
- 4 Worldwide, around 322,000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer every year.
- 5 The average 5-year survival rate for ovarian cancer is just 46%.
- 6 Historically, around 70% of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer will find they are already in the advanced stages of the disease.
- 7 When diagnosed in the later stages, only 29% of women will survive beyond 5 years of their diagnosis.
- 8 If caught before the cancer has spread, survival rates for ovarian cancer patients are as high as 92%. However, only 19% of cases are diagnosed early due to vagueness of symptoms and lack of an early detection screening test.
- 9 The only way to confirm an ovarian cancer diagnosis is through invasive surgery and biopsy.
- 10 64% of the community incorrectly believes that a Pap smear will detect ovarian cancer - it won't.
- 11 This year, around 1,800 Australian women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer.
- 12 The number of women being diagnosed with ovarian cancer is increasing every year. It is projected that by 2030, 2,200 women will be diagnosed per year.
- 13 The symptoms of ovarian cancer are often vague, and may not even present significantly until the cancer has advanced. Symptoms can include persistent or sudden onset of: bloating and abdominal swelling, appetite loss or feeling full quickly, tiredness, unexplained changes in weight, change in frequency of urination and lower back pain.
- 14 Around 10-15% of ovarian cancer patients are found to have one of the BRCA gene mutations or other similar gene mutations.
- 15 The most common types of ovarian cancer are epithelial, germ cell and stromal cell.
- 16 Epithelial ovarian cancer accounts for 85-90% of all ovarian cancers.
- 17 BRCA germline mutations are associated with 10-15% of high grade serous ovarian cancers.



OVARIAN
CANCER
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Illustration: Nina

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- 18** It is estimated that about 44% of women who inherit a BRCA1 mutation and about 17% of women who inherit a BRCA2 mutation will develop ovarian cancer by the age of 80.
- 19** The use of birth control pills has been found to reduce a woman's risk of ovarian cancer by 25-28% compared to women who have never used birth control.
- 20** A woman's risk of ovarian cancer decreases with pregnancy and breastfeeding. Pregnancy reduces the risk of ovarian cancer by approximately 30 per cent.
- 21** High grade serous carcinomas are the most common type of ovarian cancer, accounting for around 70% of all cases.
- 22** More than 80% of women experience a recurrence after initial surgery and treatment, at which point their cancer is likely to become chemo-resistant.
- 23** Chemoresistance is responsible for treatment failure and mortality for more than 90% of patients with advanced stage ovarian cancer.
- 24** Ovarian cancer treatments have not changed much since 1992.
- 25** The average survival rate for ovarian cancer in 2020 (46%) is lower than the average survival rate for all cancers in 1975, when the modern cancer research era began.
- 26** Proportionally, more women die from ovarian cancer than breast cancer, due to such a high number of women being diagnosed in the advanced stages of the disease.
- 27** The Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF) is the largest funder of ovarian cancer research, after the Australian Government.
- 28** 49% of early detection research in Australia has been funded by the OCRF, thanks to the generosity of community supporters.
- 29** Frocktober has raised over \$2.9 million for the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF) since it began in 2007.
- 30** Clinicians, researchers and women impacted by ovarian cancer consistently nominate early detection as the number one breakthrough they believe will save lives.
- 31** With an early detection test, it is estimated that over a ten year period, the lives of 8,000 Australian women and girls and 1.3 million women and girls globally could be saved.

