

3 important questions about ovarian cancer



A study by researchers at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center found that a simple 3-question paper-and-pencil survey can effectively identify women who are having symptoms that may indicate ovarian cancer. The survey takes less than 2 minutes to complete in a doctor's office.

The study represents the first evaluation of an ovarian cancer symptom-screening tool in a primary care setting among normal-risk women as part of their routine medical-history check-up. The results are published in the *Open Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

Early detection of ovarian cancer is key to survival. Cure rates for those diagnosed when the disease is confined to the ovary are as high as 90%. But more than 70% of women with ovarian cancer are diagnosed with advanced-stage disease, when the survival rate is lower.

The survey's 3 questions ask if a woman currently has one or more of the following:

1. Abdominal and/or pelvic pain
2. Feeling full quickly and/or unable to eat normally
3. Abdominal bloating and/or increased abdomen size

The survey also asked about the frequency and duration of these symptoms, how many days a month they occur, and for how long.

Talk with your doctor about any of these symptoms.