

North Dakota Women's Health CORE

A National Center of *Excellence* in Women's Health Demonstration Project

Gynecologic Cancer

What are Gynecologic Cancers?

- Gynecologic cancers are the uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells originating in the female reproductive organs, including the cervix, ovaries, uterus, fallopian tubes, vagina, and vulva
- Diet, exercise, and lifestyle choices play a significant role in the prevention of cancer. Additionally, knowing your family history can increase your chances of early diagnosis.
- Each year approximately 82,550 women in the US are diagnosed with cancer affecting the reproductive organs.

Types of Gynecologic Cancer

Ovarian Cancer
Uterine Cancer
Cervical Cancer
Vulvar Cancer
Vaginal Cancer
Fallopian Tubes Cancer

Uterine Cancer

SYMPTOMS: warning signs include any bleeding after menopause, or irregular vaginal bleeding before menopause

RISK FACTORS: Obesity, Hypertension, Diabetes, inappropriate estrogen use, Tamoxifen use, and late menopause. Women who have not been pregnant also have a slightly higher risk for uterine cancer.

- Cancer of the endometrium (lining of the uterus) is the most common cancer of the female reproductive organs.
- It is estimated that 40,880 new cases will be diagnosed and approximately 7,310 deaths from uterine cancer in the US in 2005.

Ovarian Cancer

SYMPTOMS: changes or discomforts such as pressure or fullness in the pelvis, abdominal bloating, or changes in bowel and bladder patterns, that are constant and progressive

RISK FACTORS: the risk of ovarian cancer increases with age, especially around the time of menopause. A family history of ovarian cancer is one of the most important risk factors. Infertility and not bearing children are also risk factors.

- Ovarian Cancer ranks 4th as a cause of cancer deaths among women, and causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system.
- It is estimated that there will be more than 22,220 new cases diagnosed and approximately 16,210 deaths from ovarian cancer in the US in 2005.

Cervical Cancer

SYMPTOMS: bleeding after intercourse, excessive discharge and abnormal bleeding between periods

RISK FACTORS: failure to receive regular examination often eliminates the opportunity for early diagnosis through cervical cancer screening. Persistent high-risk HPV infection has been shown to be the cause of virtually all cervical cancers, though other risk factors include smoking, HIV infection, and early age intercourse

- Only gynecologic cancer that can be prevented by regular screening
- An estimated 10,370 cases of invasive cervical cancer are expected to be diagnosed and approximately 3,710 deaths in the US in 2005.

Information found at the Gynecologic Cancer Foundation website:
<http://www.thegcf.org/default.htm>, 2005 State of the State of Gynecologic Cancers