

Photo Credit: Jen Fariello



In the Know About Women's Cancers

What are gynecologic cancers?

Gynecologic cancers - or GYN cancers - are any cancer that starts in a woman's reproductive organs. These "below-the-belt" cancers are divided into five main types: cervical, ovarian, uterine (endometrial), vaginal, and vulvar.

What is the scope of the problem?

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2014 nearly 95,000 women will be diagnosed with a GYN cancer in the United States. GLOBOCAN, a project of the International Agency for Research on Cancer, estimates almost 1 million women will be diagnosed with a GYN cancer worldwide annually.

Nearly one-third of these women will die from these cancers.

Despite the statistics - and these lives lost - GYN cancers are still widely ignored. They kill as many patients as prostate cancer, yet prostate cancer research receives 50% more federal funding than all GYN cancers combined.

Survivors often say, "I didn't know," referring to the signs and symptoms of below the belt cancers. All of the following are symptoms of one or more GYN cancers:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Abdominal bloating
- Pelvic pain or pressure
- Extreme fatigue
- Abdominal or back pain
- Frequent urination

If you have any of these symptoms for 2 weeks or more, contact your physician.

Did You Know?

- **Cervical** cancer is almost totally preventable if children - both girls and boys - receive the HPV vaccine, which can be given as early as age 11. The CDC and the FDA report that the vaccines are safe and comparable to other vaccines commonly provided to children, but there is still a need for education and community engagement to increase the rates of vaccination.
- 1 in 70 women will be diagnosed with **ovarian** cancer during her lifetime. Nearly 15% of ovarian cancers are hereditary and associated with abnormalities with the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genetic pathways.
- The use of birth control pills has been shown to reduce the risk of **ovarian** cancer by up to 60%.
- Women who are overweight or obese are 2-4 times more likely to develop **uterine** cancer. And almost 75% of women diagnosed with uterine cancer have early stage disease, which is most often curable.

How can you help?

You can make a difference and help women learn about the signs, symptoms, and risks of gynecologic cancers in a number of ways.

- Inform your Congressional representatives about upcoming research initiatives, legislative needs, and awareness campaigns.
- Host a screening of **No Evidence of Disease**, the award-winning, feature-length documentary about a rock band of gynecologic oncologists who use their music to spread awareness and shine a light on the riveting stories of their patients—women fighting for their lives.
- Share **What Every Woman Should Know** with your family and friends. This 16-minute multimedia video highlights the signs and symptoms of all five main GYN cancers and is available for free at www.nedthemovie.com.
- Take part in cancer awareness-raising events year-round—including the **Globe-athon** and the **National Race to End Women's Cancer**—to get people talking about GYN cancers. Volunteer, spread the word, make a donation, make some noise!

Resources

Learn more and get involved by visiting:

www.globeathon.com

www.NEDthemovie.com/resources-links

www.foundationforwomenscancer.org

www.CDC.gov/cancer/gynecologic



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