

## Ovarian Cancer Awareness: Know the Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies

Abiyu Assefa\*

Department of cancer Research, University of Mekelle, Mekelle, Ethiopia

\*Corresponding authors: Abiyu Assefa, Department of Cancer Research, University of Mekelle, Mekelle, Ethiopia, E-mail: abiyman1243@gmail.com

**Received:** 01-Mar-2024, Manuscript No. AOT-24-130612; **Editor assigned:** 04-Mar-2024, PreQC No. AOT-24-130612 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 20-Mar-2024, QC No. AOT-24-130612; **Revised:** 27-Mar-2024, Manuscript No. AOT-24-130612 (R); **Published:** 03-Apr-2024, DOI: 10.4172/aot.1000270

**Citation:** Assefa A (2024) Ovarian Cancer Awareness: Know the Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies. J Oncol Res Treat. 9:270.

**Copyright:** © 2024 Assefa A. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

### Description

Ovarian cancer is a formidable adversary in the province of women's health, representing one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women worldwide. While it may not be as prevalent as some other types of cancer, its stealthy nature often means that it is diagnosed at an advanced stage, leading to poorer outcomes. However, with increased awareness of its risk factors and effective prevention strategies, there is hope for early detection and improved survival rates.

### Understanding ovarian cancer

Before searching into the risk factors and prevention strategies, it's crucial to grasp the basics of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer develops in the ovaries, the reproductive glands responsible for producing eggs and hormones. It can arise from different types of cells within the ovary, leading to various subtypes with distinct characteristics and treatment approaches. Ovarian cancer often remains asymptomatic in its early stages, earning it the moniker of the "silent killer." Symptoms may not manifest until the disease has progressed, making early detection challenging. Common symptoms include abdominal bloating, pelvic pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, frequent urination, and changes in bowel habits. However, these symptoms are nonspecific and can be attributed to various benign conditions, contributing to delays in diagnosis.

### Risk factors for ovarian cancer

Several factors can increase a woman's risk of developing ovarian cancer. While some risk factors are modifiable, others are inherent and beyond one's control. Understanding these risk factors is crucial for early detection and prevention efforts.

**Age:** Ovarian cancer primarily affects postmenopausal women, with the risk increasing with age. Most cases are diagnosed in women over the age of 50.

**Family history and genetics:** Women with a family history of ovarian, breast, or colorectal cancer are at a higher risk. Inherited genetic mutations, particularly in the *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes, significantly elevate the risk of ovarian cancer. Other genetic syndromes, such as Lynch syndrome, also increase susceptibility.

**Reproductive factors:** Women who have never been pregnant or had children, or those who had their first child after the age of 35, face a higher risk of ovarian cancer. Additionally, early onset of menstruation and late menopause increase the number of ovulatory cycles, potentially heightening the risk.

**Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** Prolonged use of estrogen-alone hormone replacement therapy, especially without progesterone, has been associated with an increased risk of ovarian cancer.

**Endometriosis:** Endometriosis, a condition where the tissue lining the uterus grows outside the uterus, has been linked to a higher risk of ovarian cancer.

**Obesity:** Excess body weight, particularly abdominal obesity, is associated with an increased risk of developing ovarian cancer.

**Smoking:** Cigarette smoking has been identified as a risk factor for mucinous ovarian cancer, a subtype of ovarian cancer.

**Environmental factors:** Exposure to certain environmental pollutants and toxins, such as asbestos, may increase the risk of ovarian cancer.

### Prevention strategies for ovarian cancer

While some risk factors for ovarian cancer are beyond one's control, there are proactive steps that women can take to mitigate their risk and promote early detection.

**Regular health checkups and screening:** Routine gynecological examinations and pelvic exams can help detect ovarian abnormalities early. However, it's important to note that there is currently no effective screening test for ovarian cancer in the general population.

**Genetic counseling and testing:** Women with a strong family history of ovarian or breast cancer should consider genetic counseling and testing for *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutations. Identifying high-risk individuals allows for proactive risk management strategies, such as increased surveillance or prophylactic surgery.

**Birth control pills:** Oral contraceptives have been shown to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer, particularly among women who use them for several years. The protective effect is thought to be related to the suppression of ovulation.

**Pregnancy and breastfeeding:** Pregnancy and breastfeeding reduce the number of ovulatory cycles a woman experiences over her lifetime, which may lower the risk of ovarian cancer.

**Healthy lifestyle choices:** Adopting a healthy lifestyle can help reduce the risk of ovarian cancer and improve overall well-being. This includes maintaining a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, as well as engaging in regular physical activity and avoiding tobacco products.

**Limiting Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** If considering hormone replacement therapy for menopausal symptoms, women should discuss the potential risks and benefits with their healthcare

provider. Short-term, low-dose HRT may be preferable for symptom management.

**Awareness and education:** Increasing awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms and risk factors among women and healthcare professionals is essential for early detection and timely intervention. Education campaigns can empower women to recognize potential warning signs and seek medical attention promptly.

## Conclusion

Ovarian cancer poses a significant health challenge for women worldwide, with its elusive nature often leading to late-stage diagnoses

and limited treatment options. However, by understanding the risk factors associated with ovarian cancer and implementing effective prevention strategies, women can take proactive steps to reduce their risk and improve their chances of early detection and successful treatment. Ongoing research efforts aimed at developing innovative screening methods and targeted therapies hold promise for further advancements in ovarian cancer prevention and care. Ultimately, raising awareness, promoting education, and advocating for early detection are critical in the fight against ovarian cancer.