

# FOR YOUR PATIENT



## National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

OVARIAN CANCER is one of the deadliest cancers that affect women. In the United States in 2010, the American Cancer Society predicts there will be 21,880 new cases of ovarian cancer and 13,850 deaths.<sup>1</sup> When detected at its earliest stage, ovarian cancer has a greater than 93% 5-year survival.<sup>1</sup> Only 19% of cases are found in the earliest stages, however, because the symptoms of ovarian cancer are nonspecific and good methods of early detection are not yet available.<sup>2</sup> Around 70% of patients with ovarian cancer will have a recurrence, depending on the stage at which it was diagnosed.<sup>3</sup>

September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in the United States. To help spread awareness about ovarian cancer and share facts about risk, detection, recurrence, and treatment, events such as ovarian cancer runs and candlelight vigils will be held in towns nationwide throughout the month.

Visit our Web site to find a list of events near you.

### REFERENCES

1. Cancer Facts & Figures 2010. American Cancer Society. <http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsfigures/cancerfactsfigures/cancer-facts-and-figures-2010>. Accessed July 19, 2010.
2. What is Ovarian Cancer. [http://www.ovarian.org/what\\_is\\_ovarian\\_cancer.php](http://www.ovarian.org/what_is_ovarian_cancer.php). Accessed July 19, 2010.
3. Treatment. Ovarian Cancer National Alliance. <http://www.ovariancancer.org/about-ovarian-cancer/treatment/>. Accessed July 19, 2010.

## What you should know about chemotherapy drugs

WOMEN with recurrent ovarian cancer have many important treatment-related questions to consider. You may wonder when your treatment should begin, what medications you should take, and how these drugs will affect your quality of life. Or, if you have already received treatment and your cancer has returned, you may wonder how your treatment options have changed.

One of the most important factors is whether your cancer is platinum-sensitive or platinum-resistant. Platinum-sensitive cancers recur after 6 months or more of remission, are responsive to platinum-based therapy, and are often treated using more than one agent. Patients with platinum-sensitive cancers have the most treatment options available to them. Platinum-resistant cancers recur less than 6 months after initial treatment, are not responsive to platinum-based therapy, and are usually treated with a nonplatinum single agent. Women with platinum-resistant

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### Ways to advocate

#### United States of Teal

[www.unitedstatesofteal.org](http://www.unitedstatesofteal.org)

Encourage your state leaders to send in their pledge cards to wear teal during National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, pass out symptom cards, and more.

#### Teal Toes

[www.tealtoes.org](http://www.tealtoes.org)

Visit this Web site for a list of teal nail polish colors to wear to increase awareness about ovarian cancer.

#### Teal Tea

[www.tealtea.com](http://www.tealtea.com)

This Web site lists events the foundation hosts, such as tea and ice cream social fundraising events.

#### Menopause the Musical

[www.menopausethemusical.com](http://www.menopausethemusical.com)

This humorous musical, performed at locations nationwide, donates a portion of its proceeds to local and regional ovarian cancer chapters to help raise awareness.

#### Teal Diva

[www.tealdiva.org/?load=flash](http://www.tealdiva.org/?load=flash)

Order ovarian cancer t-shirts; ovarian cancer awareness events are also posted.

### BY THE NUMBERS

**21,880**

Estimated new cases of ovarian cancer in the United States for 2010

**13,850**

Estimated number of deaths from ovarian cancer in the United States in 2010

**70%-90%**

Percent of patients with ovarian cancer who will have a recurrence

### Resources about Treatment

**National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, Ovarian Cancer Resource guide for women with recurrent disease**  
[www.ovarian.org/assets/pdf/NOCC\\_Recurrent.pdf](http://www.ovarian.org/assets/pdf/NOCC_Recurrent.pdf)

**The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Ovarian Cancer**  
[www.mdanderson.org/patient-and-cancer-information/cancer-information/cancer-types/ovarian-cancer/index.html](http://www.mdanderson.org/patient-and-cancer-information/cancer-information/cancer-types/ovarian-cancer/index.html)

**Highlights from the 2009 American Society of Clinical Oncology Guide Cervical and Ovarian Cancer**  
[www.cancerca.org/pdf/booklets/ASCO\\_Guide\\_2009/ASCO\\_2009\\_c04\\_Cervical\\_Ovarian.pdf](http://www.cancerca.org/pdf/booklets/ASCO_Guide_2009/ASCO_2009_c04_Cervical_Ovarian.pdf)

**Johns Hopkins Pathology, General Q&A about Recurrent Ovarian Cancer**  
[www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu/recurrentqa.cfm](http://www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu/recurrentqa.cfm)

**UpToDate, Patient information: Ovarian cancer treatment**  
[www.uptodate.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~dFuuyaQoS5ASd](http://www.uptodate.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~dFuuyaQoS5ASd)

**Cancer Research UK, Living with advanced or recurrent ovarian cancer**  
[www.cancerhelp.org.uk/type/ovarian-cancer/living/living-with-advanced-or-recurrent-ovarian-cancer](http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk/type/ovarian-cancer/living/living-with-advanced-or-recurrent-ovarian-cancer)

## MORE RESOURCES ONLINE

Nutrition during cancer treatment

Key considerations for selecting a treatment

Finding a gynecologic oncologist

cancer are unlikely to benefit from retreatment with the same chemotherapy drugs, so these patients must be treated with another type of chemotherapy.<sup>1</sup>

Once your doctor determines which type of recurrent ovarian cancer you have, you can work together to choose the most effective treatment. You can empower yourself by learning more about commonly-used chemotherapy and hormonal drugs. The following list of common drugs used to treat recurrent ovarian cancer details how they are administered and what side effects they may cause.

- **Altretamine (Hexalen)**  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds/a601200.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds/a601200.html)
- **Capecitabine (Xeloda)**  
[www.xeloda.com](http://www.xeloda.com)
- **Gemcitabine (Gemzar)**  
[www.gemzar.com/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.gemzar.com/Pages/index.aspx)
- **Irinotecan (Camptosar)**  
[www.pfizeroncology.com/sites/pop/pages/camptosar.aspx](http://www.pfizeroncology.com/sites/pop/pages/camptosar.aspx)
- **Liposomal doxorubicin (Doxil)**  
[www.doxil.com](http://www.doxil.com)
- **Paclitaxel (Taxol)**  
[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0000419](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0000419)

For the complete list of drugs, please visit our Web site.

### REFERENCE

1. [www.ovarian.org/assets/pdf/NOCC\\_Recurrent.pdf](http://www.ovarian.org/assets/pdf/NOCC_Recurrent.pdf)

## 10 questions to ask at your next exam

COMMUNICATION with your health care team is crucial to understanding your diagnosis and the treatment options available to you. The more you know and understand about your cancer, the better equipped you will be to deal with it. Writing down a list of questions you have and bringing it with you to your appointments can help improve communication between you and your health care providers. Conducting research at the library or on the Web about treatment options you're curious about will also help increase your knowledge and guide you about what you should ask. Don't be afraid to ask as many questions as you need to; knowing the specifics will keep you better informed, and your doctor is there to help you.

Ask these 10 questions at your next exam to start improving communication with your doctor:

1. What does this diagnosis mean for me?
2. What medications should be used, and in what order?
3. Is surgery an option?
4. What are the side effects of treatment, and how severe will they be?



5. How will treatment help me? Do the potential benefits outweigh the risks?
6. Are there clinical trials open to me?
7. What signs should I look for that might indicate the ovarian cancer has come back?
8. How will this treatment affect my quality of life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?
9. If I'm worried about the cost of treatment, who can help me with these concerns?
10. Is there anything else I should be asking?

**For more tips on communicating with your health care professional:**

- [www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu/coping.cfm?CategoryID=12](http://www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu/coping.cfm?CategoryID=12)
- [www.cancercare.org/pdf/fact\\_sheets/fs\\_doctor\\_talk\\_en.pdf](http://www.cancercare.org/pdf/fact_sheets/fs_doctor_talk_en.pdf)
- [www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Ovarian+Cancer?sectionTitle=Questions\\_to\\_Ask\\_the\\_Doctor](http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Ovarian+Cancer?sectionTitle=Questions_to_Ask_the_Doctor)

## Is a clinical trial right for me?

CLINICAL TRIALS are research studies that involve people and test new ways to prevent, detect, diagnose, or treat cancer and other diseases. These trials often recruit patients who have tried several methods of cancer treatment already, making a clinical trial a promising option for those with recurrent ovarian cancer. Before deciding to participate in a clinical trial, you should consider a number of important factors. Use the following checklist as a guide to the steps you should take in deciding whether or not a clinical trial will fit your individual criteria and goals for treatment.

1. **Understand clinical trials** First, familiarize yourself with what a clinical trial is, why it is important, and how it might help you. To learn more, you can
  - Ask your doctor if he/she knows of any trials, and discuss whether a trial is right for your type of recurrent ovarian cancer
  - Read the The National Cancer Institute (NCI) booklet Taking Part in Cancer Treatment Research Studies, available online at [www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/Taking-Part-in-Cancer-Treatment-Research-Studies](http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/Taking-Part-in-Cancer-Treatment-Research-Studies)
  - Visit ClinicalTrials.gov's Understanding Clinical Trials Web site, <http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/info/understand>.
2. **Complete the Cancer Details checklist** If you decide to look for a clinical trial, you must know the details about your cancer diagnosis. Each clinical trial has very particular eligibility criteria. To help you determine which trials you might be able to participate in, fill out the NCI Cancer Details Checklist, available at <http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/finding/treatment-trial-guide/page15>, with as much detail as possible. Keep the list beside you as you search for trials.
3. **Narrow your search criteria** After you have fully completed the Cancer

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## Ovarian cancer support resources

**American Society of Clinical Oncology**  
888-273-3508, [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net)

Provides information about ovarian cancer, coping, survivorship, advocacy and policy, publications, multimedia, and more

**CancerCare**

[www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org); [www.cancercare.org/get\\_help/help\\_by\\_diagnosis/diagnosis.php?diagnosis=ovarian](http://www.cancercare.org/get_help/help_by_diagnosis/diagnosis.php?diagnosis=ovarian)

Offers a telephone counseling service through a partnership with the L'Oréal Paris and Ovarian Cancer Research fund, support groups, connect education workshops, financial assistance resources, links to fact sheets about ovarian cancer, and more

**CONVERSATIONS!**

806-355-2565, [www.ovarian-news.org](http://www.ovarian-news.org)

Raises awareness and understanding of ovarian cancer, advocates for increased research and funding for more effective diagnostics and treatment, and provides tips for coping

**EyesOnThePrize.org**

[www.eyesontheprize.org](http://www.eyesontheprize.org)

Provides information and emotional support from the survivor's perspective to women with gynecologic cancers, their families and friends, and health care providers

**Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE)**

866-824-7475, [www.facingourrisk.org](http://www.facingourrisk.org)

Provides support to women who are at high risk for getting breast and ovarian cancers due to their family history and genetic status

**Gemzar**

[www.gemzar.com/pages/pat400\\_ovarian\\_cancer.aspx](http://www.gemzar.com/pages/pat400_ovarian_cancer.aspx)

Provides information on ovarian cancer, diagnosis and staging, side effects, frequently asked questions, and facts about Gemzar and other treatment options

More resources available on our Web site.

### Resources for patients with recurrent ovarian cancer seeking clinical trials

#### NCI's list of cancer clinical trials

[www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/search](http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/search)

A detailed database of trials searchable by recurrent ovarian cancer

#### NCI's Cancer Information Service at 800-4-CANCER

Free help and assistance finding clinical trials in English and Spanish from 8 AM to 8 PM EST.

#### ClinicalTrials.gov

A database of clinical trials run by the US National Library of Medicine; can narrow results to include only recurrent ovarian cancer

#### Trialcheck

[www.cancertrialshelp.org/trialcheck/](http://www.cancertrialshelp.org/trialcheck/)

A database searchable by specific cancer type; includes a hospital directory

#### Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) list of member companies

[www.phrma.org/about\\_phrma/member\\_company\\_list/members](http://www.phrma.org/about_phrma/member_company_list/members)

Many of these Web sites sponsor and list clinical trials

#### Clinical Trials Portal of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations

<http://clinicaltrials.ifpma.org/clinicaltrials>

Listing of trials searchable by cancer type or drug name

#### Acurian, Patient Recruitment Solutions

[www.acurian.com](http://www.acurian.com)  
Searchable database; free membership; notifies of trials in your area

#### Cancer411.org Clinical Trials

[www.cancer411.org/clinicaltrials/index.asp](http://www.cancer411.org/clinicaltrials/index.asp)

Listing of clinical trials searchable by type of cancer, location, trial phase, patient's age, and drug

[More resources available on our Web site.](#)

Details Checklist, you should consult resources that list current, or open, clinical trials. Narrow your search results by specifying that you have recurrent ovarian cancer to find trials that are appropriate for you. Resources that can help you locate trials are listed to the left.

- 4. Review the trial details** Once you identify trials you may be interested in, carefully consider the following details of the trial:
  - **Trial objective** Determine the main purpose of the trial and make sure it aligns with your goals for treatment.
  - **Eligibility and location** Make sure you meet all the requirements for the trial, and decide where and how often you are willing to travel.
  - **Study length** Ask how long the trial will run, and determine if it seems reasonable to you.
- 5. Ask questions** Call the clinical trial team and ask questions that will help you determine if this particular trial is right for you. You may want to ask for the potential risks and benefits or for a copy of the informed consent document, for example. For a detailed list of further questions you should ask, visit [www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/treatment-trial-guide/page12](http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/treatment-trial-guide/page12).
- 6. Discuss your options with your doctor** Last, discuss any questions or concerns about the treatment with your doctor. Also ask about the risks and benefits of standard treatment for recurrent ovarian cancer. Once you have considered all these factors, make an informed decision about whether or not a clinical trial is right for you.

## Goals for treating recurrent ovarian cancer



- **Be realistic about the cumulative toxicities of your treatments.** Certain treatments may work effectively for 2 to 3 months but have toxicities 6 months down the line.
- **Prolong survival and delay progression.** Talk with your doctor to find a balance between fighting disease-related side effects and minimizing effects caused by your treatment.
- **Maintain the highest possible quality of life.** All treatment will have some side effects. Make choices that will allow you the best quality of life, and consider the long-term impact of the choices you make now.
- **Treat your cancer like a chronic disease.** Think of your cancer as a long-term disease that may go into a remission but will never go away completely. Anticipate impending decision points to better prepare you for when they do arrive.
- **Participate in the decision-making process.** Actively educating yourself about your treatment options and discussing them with your health care provider will help you maintain the hope and positive thinking necessary to cope with chronic disease.
- **Deal with your emotions.** Many women experience feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, fear, and sadness following a recurrence. Talk about your emotions with your family, friends, health care team, or therapist. ■

### **Gemzar**

[http://www.gemzar.com/pages/pat400\\_ovarian\\_cancer.aspx](http://www.gemzar.com/pages/pat400_ovarian_cancer.aspx)

Provides information on ovarian cancer, diagnosis and staging, side effects, frequently asked questions, and facts about Gemzar and other treatment options.

### **Gilda Radner Familial Ovarian Cancer Registry**

1-800-682-7426, [www.ovariancancer.com](http://www.ovariancancer.com)

Collects data on the link between heredity and ovarian cancer. The organization also offers general counseling, support groups and assistance with genetic screening.

### **Gynecologic Cancer Foundation / Women's Cancer Network**

1-800-444-4441, [www.thegcf.org](http://www.thegcf.org); [www.wcn.org](http://www.wcn.org)

Works to ensure public awareness of gynecologic cancer prevention, early diagnosis and proper treatment as well as to support research and training.

### **HealthCentral**

[www.healthcentral.com/](http://www.healthcentral.com/)

Provides an extensive variety of articles on ovarian cancer topics such as symptoms, treatment information, and advice from a gynecologist.

### **Healthline.com**

[www.healthline.com/channel/ovarian-cancer.html](http://www.healthline.com/channel/ovarian-cancer.html)

Contains information on side effect management, how to decide on a treatment, drugs, alternative therapy, and suggested reading.

### **Lifescrypt.com**

[www.lifescrypt.com/](http://www.lifescrypt.com/)

Contains ovarian cancer health news and extensive information about ovarian cancer.

### **MayoClinic.com**

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/ovarian-cancer/DS00293](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/ovarian-cancer/DS00293)

Resources about preparing for appointments, tests and diagnosis, treatments and drugs, lifestyle and home remedies, and coping and support.

### **National Cancer Institute information for patients (PDQ)**

[www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/treatment/ovarianepithelial/patient/](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/treatment/ovarianepithelial/patient/)

Also <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/ovarian>

Extensive facts about treatment options by stage of disease, chance of recovery, and more.

### **National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship**

[www.canceradvocacy.org/resources/](http://www.canceradvocacy.org/resources/)

Features a Cancer Survival Toolbox, a free audio program that helps patients develop skills to manage their cancers, links to facts about health insurance, and more.

### **National Ovarian Cancer Coalition**

1-888-682-7426, [www.ovarian.org](http://www.ovarian.org)

Raises awareness about ovarian cancer and promotes education about the disease. Committed to improving the survival rate and quality of life for women with ovarian cancer.

### **OncoLink.org**

[www.oncolink.org/types/article.cfm?c=6&s=19&ss=766&id=8589](http://www.oncolink.org/types/article.cfm?c=6&s=19&ss=766&id=8589)

Provides information on making treatment decisions, news, and tips on nutrition, sexuality and fertility, and exercise, as well as an gallery of art created by patients.

### **Ovar' Coming Together**

[www.ovarian-cancer.org/](http://www.ovarian-cancer.org/)

Offers a newsletter, event listings, news, links to Web sites that offer comprehensive packets of information, and more.

### **OvarianCancerAwareness.org**

[www.ovariancancerawareness.org/home.aspx](http://www.ovariancancerawareness.org/home.aspx)

Personal stories, ovarian cancer information, news and events, video clips.

### **Ovarian Cancer National Alliance**

1-202-331-1332, [www.ovariancancer.org](http://www.ovariancancer.org)

Works on a coordinated national effort to make ovarian cancer education, policy and research priorities of national policy makers and health care leaders.

### **Ovarian Cancer Research Fund, Inc.**

[www.ocrf.org](http://www.ocrf.org)

News and events, support such as links to songs on iTunes, survivor stories, tributes, and research and grants information.

### **People Living with Cancer (PLWC)**

[www.peoplelivingwithcancer.org](http://www.peoplelivingwithcancer.org)

Information about survivorship, finding an oncologist, cancer news and meetings, publications and resources, and multimedia.

### **SHARE: Self Help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer**

1-866-891-2392, [www.sharecancersupport.org](http://www.sharecancersupport.org)

Services include national hotlines to find local support and resources, New York City area survivor-led support groups, wellness programs, educational forums and advocacy activities.

### **WebMD**

[www.webmd.com/ovarian-cancer/default.htm](http://www.webmd.com/ovarian-cancer/default.htm)

Services include articles on specific ovarian cancer topics, treatment and care, ovarian cancer glossary, Q&A, and additional resources.