

# Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary



## Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month – March 2010

March 2010 is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and provides the media with a great opportunity to alert women to the potentially lifesaving importance of common symptoms which may indicate the need for further testing to exclude the possibility of this devastating killer disease. Mums are so busy looking after their families, homes and jobs that they often don't take the time to look after themselves. Perhaps a little encouragement from a daughter or loved one is just the push needed to help her take a month out to think about her own health and if necessary have the confidence to go and visit the GP. Mother's Day falls in the middle of Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and provides an excellent opportunity to remind the nations mothers, aunts and grandmothers about the importance of recognising the symptoms of early ovarian cancer and seeking appropriate medical advice. Completing this simple one page Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary can save lives! What better gift to give a woman you love on Mother's Day!

### Key Facts:

- Ovarian cancer is the commonest gynaecological cancer in the UK
- 6,600 new cases of Ovarian Cancer are diagnosed each year. (8 every hour)
- 4,400 women die from Ovarian Cancer each year. (5 every hour)
- An awareness of the key symptoms currently provides our greatest chance of detecting it at an early stage
- The average GP will only see one case of ovarian cancer every five years.
- Ovarian Cancer Screening takes 30 minutes based on a scan and a blood test
- Ovarian Cancer accounts for 6% of cancer related deaths in women.
- The survival rates from Ovarian Cancer in the UK are the worst in Europe
- Most cases of Ovarian Cancer cases present late after it has spread.
- Survival is strongly linked to the stage of the cancer when it was diagnosed and treatment started.

### Key Message

In the UK, awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer is low with few women realising that persistent stomach pain, increased abdominal size and persistent bloating, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly might be the signs of ovarian cancer. These common symptoms alongside needing to urinate more frequently, a change in bowel habits, back pain and extreme fatigue are often confused for less serious and more common conditions, such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome or the menopause. **Whilst it is most likely that these symptoms are not ovarian cancer, it is important that anybody experiencing them on most days discusses any concerns with their GP.**

A simple Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary is a useful way of recording these common symptoms for women to discuss with their GP and Annual Screening based on a transvaginal pelvic ultrasound scan and a blood test to measure a tumour marker (CA125) can be used to provide reassurance for all women over the age of 50 or younger women with a family history of ovarian or breast cancer.

For further information about the Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary or Screening for Ovarian Cancer contact us at Innermost Secrets Ltd, Spire Cardiff Hospital, Croescadarn Road, Cardiff CF23 8XL.

## OVARIAN CANCER SYMPTOM DIARY - INSTRUCTIONS FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

This patient has kept this diary because of her concerns about the possibility of ovarian cancer.

Go to [www.ukovariancancer.com](http://www.ukovariancancer.com) to read our recommendations on how to use this information.



### INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS

If you experience any of these common symptoms, please tick the day/s on which they occurred e.g. if you experienced Pelvic or Abdominal pain on a Monday and Tuesday in week one of monitoring tick Mon and Tue in the Pelvic or Abdominal pain row. Rate the severity of the symptoms from 1 (mild) to 10 (severe).

Symptom	Week One		Week Two		Week Three		Week Four		Severity
Pelvic or Abdominal Pain	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please rate severity of symptoms  Rate <input type="text"/> (1-10)
	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Increased stomach size / bloating – not bloating that comes and goes	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please rate severity of symptoms  Rate <input type="text"/> (1-10)
	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Difficulty eating / feeling full quickly	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please rate severity of symptoms  Rate <input type="text"/> (1-10)
	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sat	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### ADDITIONAL SYMPTOMS

If you experience any other additional symptoms such as changes in bowel habit etc. then please record them in the table below by ticking the box and noting the frequency and severity of these symptoms on a scale of 1 – 10.

Additional symptoms	How Often	How Severe	Other Comments
Urinary Symptoms <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/> (1-10)	
Changes in bowel habit <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/> (1-10)	
Excessive tiredness <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/> (1-10)	
Backache <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/> (1-10)	

- Remember all these symptoms are common and ovarian cancer is rare.
- Most people who have these symptoms DO NOT HAVE OVARIAN CANCER.
- Early diagnosis of ovarian cancer saves lives and it is important to tell your *doctor* if these symptoms persist.

# Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE OVARIAN CANCER SYMPTOM DIARY

The Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary is designed to help women record common symptoms which are causing them concern and to be able to usefully discuss them with their GP. Whilst many of these symptoms are common and are NOT DUE TO OVARIAN CANCER it is important that women should be encouraged to record them and if frequent, to discuss them with their GP. The diary allows women to record which symptoms they experience, how often they occur and their severity. Recent research by the Department of Health have identified that many of these symptoms occur more frequently in women who have Ovarian Cancer.

## WHO SHOULD USE THE OVARIAN CANCER SYMPTOM DIARY?

The Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary is designed to allow women to monitor the common symptoms that are sometimes associated with ovarian cancer. It should be used by women who experience the following symptoms on most days of the month:

- Stomach or pelvic pain
- Persistent abdominal bloating
- Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly

Other symptoms which may occur include the need to urinate frequently, changes in bowel habit, excessive tiredness and back pain.

If you have already seen your doctor about these symptoms it may be helpful to formally document them for four weeks and make an appointment to discuss them again

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Make an appointment to see your doctor and make sure you have completed your diary
- Your diary will help give your doctor a clear picture of your symptoms
- Your doctor should consider whether or not your symptoms might be suggestive of ovarian cancer especially if they occur often, are persistent, new to you and occur on most days.
- If your doctor feels your symptoms might be due to ovarian cancer then they can arrange a transvaginal ultrasound scan to look at your ovaries and a blood test (CA125). If these tests indicate an increased risk of ovarian cancer then you should be referred to a specialist as soon as possible.

## TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR?

- Explain to your doctor if you have concerns about the possibility of ovarian cancer
- Write down the points you would like to discuss before you go to see your doctor
- Remember you will have your Ovarian Cancer Symptom Diary to help explain your symptoms. Try to remember when they started and how often they occur and whether they are getting worse or better or variable.
- Tell your doctor if any of your family have had ovarian or breast cancer.
- If you feel your doctor has not listened to your concerns, seek a second opinion from another doctor. Sometimes people find it easier to talk with one doctor than another.