Ovarian Cancer Screening

Ovarian cancer is usually found at a late stage because there are no current screening tests that have been able to find the cancer at an earlier stage or to reduce the number of ovarian cancer deaths. Women at a high risk of ovarian cancer due to certain risks factors may benefit from screening.

Pre- and postmenopausal women are considered to have a high risk of ovarian cancer if they have a personal or family history of ovarian cancer, have or are suspected to have *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* genetic mutations, or have an elevated CA-125 level (antigen 125—a protein elevated in cancer tumor cells) as measured by a blood test. These women may decide to get screened.

The recommended imaging test to screen for ovarian cancer is ultrasound (US) (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/pelvus) to visualize the ovaries. These tests include transvaginal US (preferred), transabdominal US (in women who are not good candidates for transvaginal US), and US color Doppler (allows for visualization of blood flow). US does not use any radiation.

Pre- and postmenopausal women with no personal or family history of ovarian cancer, who do not have BRCA1 or BRCA2 genetic mutations, and who do not have an elevated CA-125 level are considered to have an average risk of ovarian cancer. It is not recommended that these women have imaging tests to screen them for ovarian cancer.

CT and MRI are usually not appropriate for women with either average or high risk of ovarian cancer.

For more information, see the Ovarian Cancer (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/ovarian-cancer) page.

— By Casey Quinlan and Phyllis Glanc, MD. This information originally appeared in the *Journal of the American College of Radiology.*

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