



Prevent Ovarian Cancer Program

Identification of high-risk women for ovarian cancer prevention

What is High-Grade Serous Ovarian Cancer?

Ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Canadian women. High-grade serous cancer (HGSC) is the most common and lethal type of ovarian cancer: 80 to 90 per cent of women diagnosed with HGSC die from this disease. The non-specific symptoms most often associated with ovarian cancer (i.e. bloating, discomfort in the pelvic area, frequent urination) make it difficult to screen for and diagnose at early stages. Fortunately, ovarian cancer can be prevented through risk-reducing surgery in women known to be at high risk. By finding ways to identify high-risk women, we can help prevent this deadly disease.



Is ovarian cancer hereditary?

Genes contain the instructions for all of our traits and are inherited (or passed on) from our mother and father. The main genes known to increase a woman's risk of developing ovarian cancer are the *breast cancer susceptibility 1 and 2* genes, referred to as *BRCA1* and *BRCA2*. One in every five women diagnosed with HGSC has an inherited *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* gene mutation. Women with *BRCA1/2* gene mutations have up to a 40 per cent risk of getting ovarian cancer in their lifetime. Even if there are no other cancers in the family, serous ovarian cancers can still be hereditary.

How do I know if I am at risk?

Because of its high association with *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* gene mutations, all women in Ontario who have been diagnosed with HGSC are eligible for government-funded genetic testing of the *BRCA1/2* genes. Unfortunately, in the past, many women with ovarian cancer died before having a genetic test. This means that, the mothers, daughters and sisters of these untested women may be at an increased risk to develop HGSC but they may not be eligible for genetic testing to find out. The **Prevent Ovarian Cancer Program** wants to change this: we hope to find and offer genetic testing to women with possible *BRCA1/2* gene mutations who would otherwise not be identified.

What is the purpose of the Prevent Ovarian Cancer Program?

Our goal is to better identify and support women at high risk for developing HGSC. We will:

- ✓ Use genetic testing to identify women who carry a *BRCA1/2* gene mutation and provide them with the knowledge and opportunity to prevent ovarian cancer from developing in the future.
- ✓ Identify new genes that may affect a woman's likelihood of developing ovarian cancer in her lifetime.
- ✓ Assess the psychosocial impact of genetic testing and identify new methods of genetic counselling for future cancer care.

What is required of participants?

- Permission to access the pathology report for your first-degree relative with ovarian cancer
- Complete a family history questionnaire
- Provide a blood sample for genetic testing
- Complete psychosocial questionnaires
- Participate in pre/post-genetic counselling

You will not be required to undergo any surgery as part of this program, however you will be provided with the information needed to make the decision that is right for you.

You may qualify to participate in the Prevent Ovarian Cancer Program if you:

- ✓ Are an Ontario resident
- ✓ Are a female at least 18 years of age
- ✓ Have a deceased first-degree relative (mother, sister or daughter) who was diagnosed with ovarian cancer



To learn more, please visit our program website or contact us directly by email or through our voice messaging system. Please do not email personal or private health information.

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Supporting Partner

