

## • SUPPORT GROUP

The Gyn Cancer TEAL Support Group was established in 2008 by a group of passionate nurses and doctors to provide peer support among women who are diagnosed with ovarian and other gynaecologic cancers at the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) located at the National University Hospital (NUH). TEAL is our awareness colour and also represents women who are Totally Empowered and Actively Living! Activities are conducted quarterly which include educational talks, seminars, workshops, excursions and year end parties.

Should you wish to join their activities, please contact them at the details on the right.  
(Mon – Fri: 8.30am – 5.30pm)

Tel:  
Email:

## • ABOUT NCIS

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) is the only comprehensive public cancer centre in Singapore treating both paediatric and adult cancers in one facility. Located at the National University Hospital (NUH), NCIS offers a broad spectrum of cancer care with expertise in prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.

## • CONTACT INFORMATION

### National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)

Radiation Therapy Centre and Breast Care Centre  
NUH Medical Centre, Level 8  
Chemotherapy Centre and Stem Cell Therapy Centre  
NUH Medical Centre, Level 9  
Cancer Centre  
NUH Medical Centre, Level 10  
(Mon – Fri: except on Public Holidays)

### For appointments, please contact

Tel: (65) 6773 7888  
Email: CancerApptLine@nuhs.edu.sg

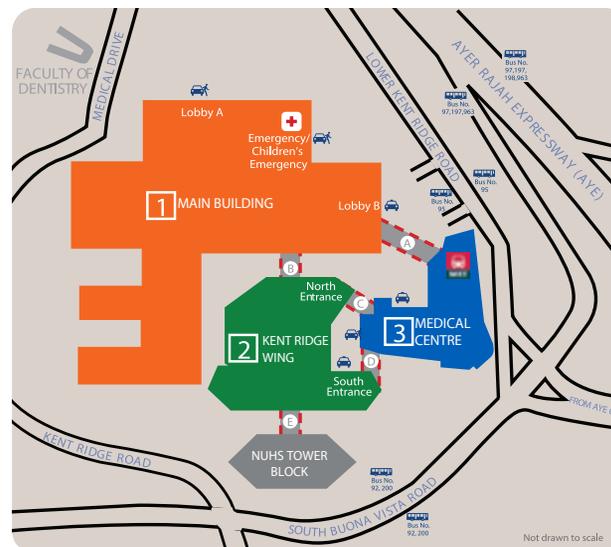
### For International Patients and Visitors

The NCIS Concierge is a one-stop centre, offering assistance and a myriad of services for international patients seeking cancer in Singapore.

Tel: (65) 6773 7888 (Mon - Fri: except on Public Holidays)  
Fax: (65) 6777 4413  
Email: ncisip@nuhs.edu.sg

### For all other general enquiries, please contact National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)

1E Kent Ridge Road,  
NUHS Tower Block, Level 7, Singapore 119228  
Email: ncis@nuhs.edu.sg  
Website: www.ncis.com.sg



### Nearest MRT Station : Kent Ridge Station (Circle Line)

Commuters can alight at the Kent Ridge Station, right at the doorstep of the NUH Medical Centre. Please exit the station via Exit C. NCIS is located on levels 8, 9 and 10 which are accessible via Lift Lobby B.



National University Hospital  
5 Lower Kent Ridge Road,  
Singapore 119074  
Tel: (65) 6779 5555  
Fax: (65) 6779 5678  
Website: www.nuh.com.sg

Information in this brochure is given as a guide only and does not replace medical advice from your doctor. Please seek advice from your doctor if you have questions related to the surgery, your health or medical condition.

Information is correct at time of printing (Mar 2012) and subject to revision without notice.



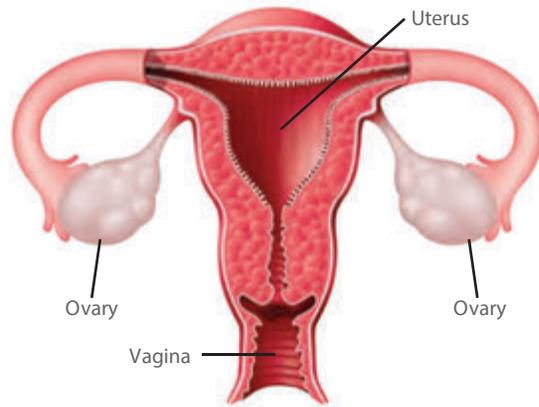
PATIENT INFORMATION

ABOUT  
OVARIAN  
CANCER

A member of the NUHS

## • WHAT IS OVARIAN CANCER ?

The ovaries are part of a woman's reproductive system. They are located in the pelvis. Each ovary is the size of an almond. The ovaries make the female hormones – estrogen and progesterone. They also release eggs. An egg travels from an ovary through a fallopian tube to the womb (uterus). When a woman goes through her menopause, her ovaries stop releasing eggs, and far lower levels of hormones are produced. The ovaries contain primitive cells, which are cells that go on to become eggs, and epithelial cells. Primitive cells that become cancerous are called germ cell tumours. Epithelial cell cancers of the ovary are more common than germ cell cancers.



## • WHO IS AT RISK?

- Strong family history of ovarian, breast, uterus or colorectal cancer.
- Personal history of cancer (Women who have had cancer of the breast, uterus, colon, or rectum have a higher risk of ovarian cancer)
- Late pregnancy or women who have never been pregnant
- Early onset of menstruation / Late menopause

*People who think they may be at risk should discuss this with their doctor.*

## • WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

Unfortunately, early ovarian cancer often does not cause obvious symptoms. This is why it is often known as a "silent killer". But, as the cancer grows, symptoms may include:

- Pressure or pain in the abdomen, pelvis, back or legs
- A swollen or bloated abdomen caused by a build-up of fluid or a tumour
- Nausea, indigestion, gas, constipation, or diarrhoea

- Trouble eating or feeling full quickly
- Feeling very tired all the time

Less common symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Feeling the need to urinate often
- Unusual vaginal bleeding (heavy periods, or bleeding after menopause)

Most often these symptoms can also be caused by problems other than cancer, only a doctor can tell for sure. Any woman with these symptoms should consult her doctor right away.

## • HOW IS OVARIAN CANCER DIAGNOSED?

If you have a symptom that suggests ovarian cancer, your doctor must find out whether it is due to cancer or to some other causes. Your doctor may ask about your personal and family medical history.

You may have one or more of the following tests.

- **Physical exam:** Your doctor checks general signs of health. Your doctor may press on your abdomen to check for tumours or an abnormal build-up of fluid.
- **Pelvic exam:** Your doctor feels the ovaries and nearby organs for lumps or other changes in their shape or size.
- **Blood tests:** Your doctor may order blood tests. The lab may check the level of several substances, including CA-125. CA-125 is a substance found on the surface of ovarian cancer cells and on some normal tissues. A high CA-125 level could be a sign of cancer or other conditions. The CA-125 test is not used alone to diagnose ovarian cancer. This test is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for monitoring a woman's response to ovarian cancer treatment and for detecting its return after treatment.
- **Ultrasound:** The ultrasound device uses sound waves that people cannot hear. The device aims sound waves at organs inside the pelvis. The waves bounce off the organs. A computer creates a picture from the echoes. The picture may show an ovarian tumour. For a better view of the ovaries, the device may be inserted into the vagina (transvaginal ultrasound).
- **Biopsy:** A biopsy is the removal of tissue or fluid to look for cancer cells. Based on the results of the blood tests and ultrasound, your doctor may suggest surgery (a laparotomy) to remove tissue and fluid from the pelvis and abdomen. Surgery is usually needed to diagnose ovarian cancer.
- **Laparoscopy:** The doctor inserts a thin, lighted tube (a laparoscope) through a small incision in the abdomen. Laparoscopy may be used to remove a small, benign cyst or an early ovarian cancer. It may also be used to learn whether cancer has spread.

## • WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

For ovarian cancer, most women have surgery and chemotherapy.

### Surgery

The surgeon makes a cut in the wall of the abdomen. This type of surgery is called a laparotomy. If ovarian cancer is found, the surgeon removes:

- both ovaries and fallopian tubes (salpingo-oophorectomy)
- the uterus (hysterectomy)
- the omentum (the thin, fatty pad of tissue that covers the intestines)
- nearby lymph nodes
- samples of tissue from the pelvis and abdomen

If the cancer has spread, the surgeon removes as much cancer as possible. This is called "debulking" surgery.

If you have early Stage I ovarian cancer, the extent of surgery may depend on whether you want to get pregnant and have children in future. Some women with very early ovarian cancer may decide with their doctor to have only one ovary, one fallopian tube, and the omentum removed.

### Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy uses anticancer drugs to kill cancer cells. Most women have chemotherapy for ovarian cancer after surgery. Some women have chemotherapy before surgery. Chemotherapy is given in cycles. Each treatment period is followed by a rest period. The length of the rest period and the number of cycles depend on the anticancer drugs used. You may have your treatment in a clinic, at the doctor's office. Some women may need to stay in the hospital during treatment.

Unfortunately, early ovarian cancer often does not cause obvious symptoms. This is why it is often known as a "silent killer".