

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GYNECOLOGICAL CANCER

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WOMEN'S HEALTH WEBINAR SERIES

SEPTEMBER 2020



**September is**



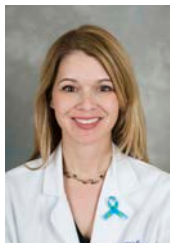
**gynecologic cancer  
awareness month**

**TAKE ACTION**

**spread education and  
awareness in your community**

## GYNECOLOGIC CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

# Meet our experts



### Heidi J. Gray, MD

Professor, Obstetrics & Gynecology  
Division Chief, Gynecologic Oncology  
Director, Gynecologic Oncology Clinical Trials  
Sites of Practice: UW Medical Center – Montlake, Seattle Cancer Care Alliance  
Expertise: Advanced robotic surgery, complex pelvic surgery, novel clinical trials and survivorship issues



### Jennifer K. Burzawa, MD

Clinical Associate Professor, Obstetrics & Gynecology  
Sites of Practice: UW Medical Center – Montlake, Valley Medical Center  
Expertise: Surgery and chemotherapy, including minimally invasive approaches such as laparoscopy



### Elise J. Simons, MD

Clinical Instructor, Obstetrics & Gynecology  
Section Head, UW Medical Center – Northwest, Gynecologic Oncology  
Director, Minimally Invasive Pelvic Surgery Fellowship, UW Medical Center – Northwest  
Sites of Practice: Women's Cancer Care Clinic at UW Medical Center – Northwest, UW Medical Center – Montlake for surgery  
Expertise: Chemotherapy and surgery for gynecologic cancers and pre-cancers, including advanced laparoscopy and robotics



### Renata R. Urban, MD

Associate Professor, Obstetrics & Gynecology  
Fellowship Director, Gynecologic Oncology  
Sites of Practice: UW Medical Center – Montlake, Seattle Cancer Care Alliance  
Expertise: Treatment of gynecologic malignancies; surgery for gynecologic cancer; perioperative and supportive care for patients with gynecologic cancers; graduate medical and patient education

**Gynecologic oncologists are medical doctors with specialized training in treating gynecologic cancers:**

- Cervical
- Ovarian
- Uterine/endometrial
- Vaginal
- Vulvar

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Foundation for Women's Cancer

# Case #1 Why am I still having periods at my age?

J.A. is a 58-year-old who wonders aloud to friends when her periods will end. She is tired of having to still buy pads and tampons at her age.



- When do women go through menopause?
- When should women seek medical advice or care for bleeding issues?
- What tests should women expect during care for abnormal bleeding around menopause?
- How common is endometrial (uterine) cancer?
- When should a woman be referred to a specialist?

*#IWishIKnew*

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I wish I knew that bleeding after menopause could possibly be cancer."

– Kim S.



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# uterine / endometrial cancer

## Know the key facts

Endometrial cancer, also known as uterine cancer, is the most common gynecologic cancer.

85% of women with endometrial cancer survive, because of early detection.

Three out of four women are diagnosed at Stage I.

Endometrial cancer usually occurs around the time of menopause, but younger women are also at risk.

### Symptoms

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding; younger women should note irregular or heavy vaginal bleeding
- Bleeding after menopause
- A watery pink or white discharge from the vagina
- Two or more weeks of persistent pain in the lower abdomen or pelvic area
- Pain during sexual intercourse

Over 90% of women diagnosed with endometrial cancer say that they experienced abnormal vaginal bleeding prior to their diagnosis.

Please see a gynecologist or gynecologic oncologist and ask about an endometrial biopsy if you experience any of these symptoms.

[foundationforwomenscancer.org](http://foundationforwomenscancer.org)



### Risk reduction

- Exercise regularly
- Keep your blood pressure and blood sugar under control
- Manage your weight

If endometrial cancer is suspected or diagnosed, consult a gynecologic oncologist. Women treated by gynecologic oncologists are more likely to get appropriate surgery and have a higher cure rate.

### Risk factors

- Taking estrogen alone without progesterone
- Obesity
- Late menopause (after age 52)
- Diabetes
- Never becoming pregnant
- Hypertension
- A family history of endometrial or colon cancer
- Use of tamoxifen



# Case #2 Can cervical cancer be prevented?

K.Z. is a 26-year-old woman wondering when she should have cervical cancer screening and the HPV vaccine.



- What is cervical cancer and how do we “screen” for it?
- What are current guidelines for starting Pap and/or HPV testing?
- What about the HPV vaccine?
  - Who and when should receive the HPV vaccine?
- What happens if my Pap test is abnormal?



Find **cervical cancer** early—have regular **Pap tests** and **HPV tests**.



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# cervical cancer

## Know the key facts

**Most cases of cervical cancer are now preventable.**

**Vaccinating young children before they become sexually active can prevent cervical precancer and cancer.**

**Regular Pap tests and HPV testing at recommended intervals are equally important in preventing cervical cancer.**

### Symptoms

- Bleeding after intercourse
- Excessive discharge and abnormal bleeding between periods
- Vaginal odor
- Pain

These symptoms may be caused by cancer or by other health problems. It is important for a woman to see her doctor if she is having any of these symptoms. Most women will have no symptoms, so getting vaccinations and regular Pap tests plus HPV tests when recommended is key to preventing cervical cancer.

### Risk factors

- Almost all cervical cancer is caused by a persistent infection with the human papillomavirus, or HPV.
- Cervical cancer usually affects women between 30 and 50, but younger women also are at risk.
- Smoking weakens the immune system and a weakened immune system can lead to persistent HPV infection.

### Risk reduction

- Get vaccinated before you become sexually active.
- Have your children vaccinated starting at age 11 or 12.
- Get Pap tests and HPV tests at the intervals recommended by your health care provider.

[foundationforwomenscancer.org](http://foundationforwomenscancer.org)



# Case #3 How do I know if I have ovarian cancer?

M.L. is a 62-year-old woman whose best friend died of ovarian cancer three years ago. She wants to know if she can be screened for early detection of ovarian cancer.



- How common is ovarian cancer?
- Who is at risk for ovarian cancer?
- Is there a genetic link to ovarian cancer?
- What are the symptoms of ovarian cancer?
- Are there screening tests for ovarian cancer?



#IWishIKnew

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I wish I knew I was at risk of getting ovarian cancer after losing two sisters to breast cancer."

– Darnell W.



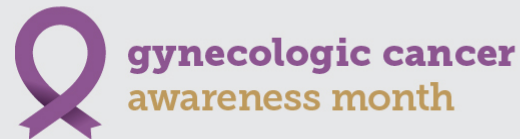
**Ovarian cancer** symptoms—see a gynecologist if you experience:

Bloating

Urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)

Pelvic or abdominal pain

Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly



# ovarian cancer

## Know the key facts

Only 15% of all ovarian cancer cases are detected at the earliest, most curable stage.

One in 71 women will develop ovarian cancer in her lifetime.

Ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer death in women.

### Symptoms

- Bloating
- Urinary symptoms, urgency or frequency
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly

These symptoms are particularly concerning if they occur almost daily for a few weeks or more. If this happens to you, see a doctor, preferably a gynecologist, and specifically ask about the possibility of ovarian cancer as a cause of your symptoms. If ovarian cancer is suspected or diagnosed, seek care first from a gynecologic oncologist.

[foundationforwomenscancer.org](http://foundationforwomenscancer.org)

### Risk reduction

- Use of oral contraceptives.
- Consider risk reducing surgery if genetic testing indicates very high risk.
- Understand your risk and listen to your body for symptoms.
- If ovarian cancer is suspected or diagnosed, seek care first from a gynecologic oncologist.

### Risk factors

- Risk increases with age, especially around the time of menopause.
- Family history of ovarian cancer, fallopian tube cancer, primary peritoneal cancer, or premenopausal breast cancer, or a personal history of premenopausal breast cancer.
- Infertility and not bearing children are risk factors, while pregnancy and the use of birth control pills decrease risk.
- Family history of both colon and endometrial cancers: any male family member with breast cancer.
- Ashkenazi Jewish heritage.



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# Resources

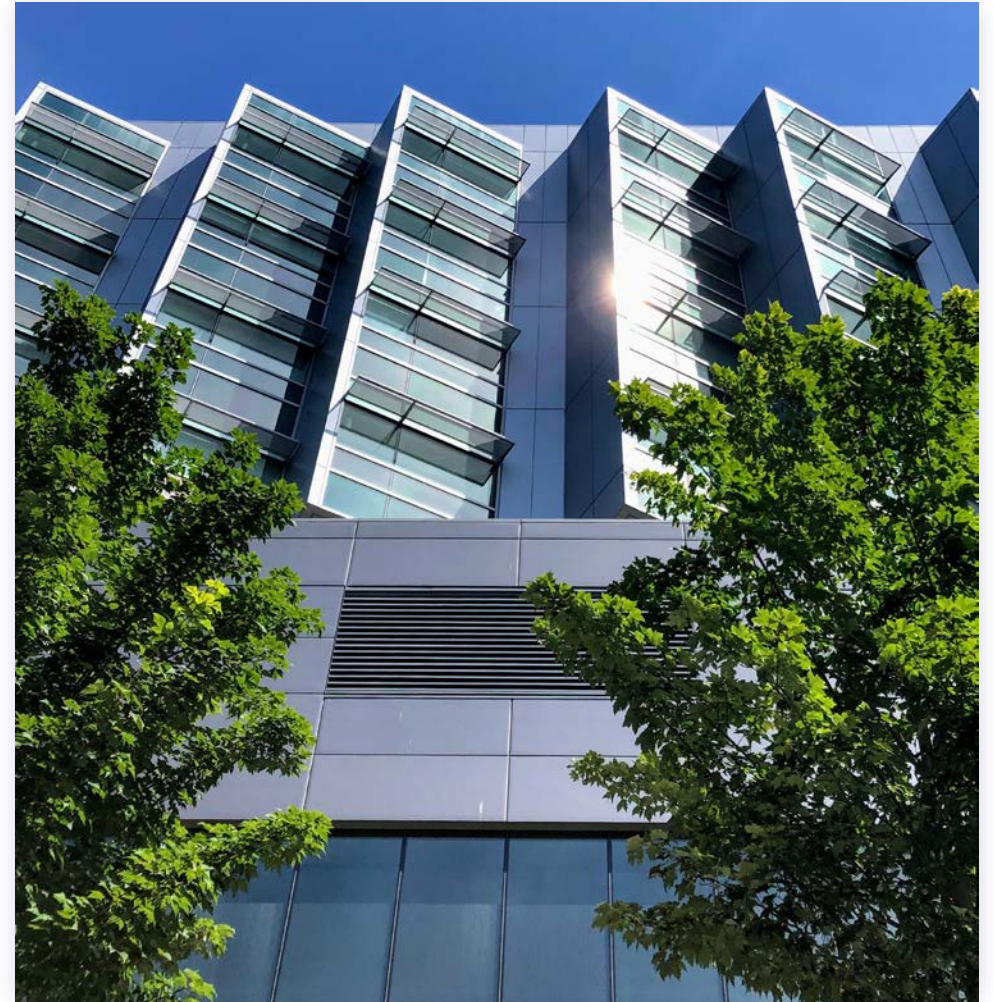
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Make an appointment:

- UW Medical Center – Montlake: 206.598.8300
- UW Medical Center – Northwest: 206.668.6806
- Valley Medical Center: 425.690.3409
- [uwmedicine.org](http://uwmedicine.org)

More information:

- Foundation for Women's Cancer
- Society of Gynecologic Oncology
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance – Clinical Trials
- Subscribe to Right As Rain – [rightasrain.uwmedicine.org](http://rightasrain.uwmedicine.org)





# QUESTIONS?

