

This fact sheet explains the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's (Task Force) draft recommendation statement on screening for ovarian cancer. It also tells you how you can send comments about the draft recommendation to the Task Force. Comments may be submitted from July 18 to August 14. The Task Force welcomes your comments.

## Screening for Ovarian Cancer

The Task Force has issued a **draft recommendation** statement on *Screening for Ovarian Cancer*. The Task Force recommends against screening for ovarian cancer in women who do not have any signs or symptoms.

This draft recommendation applies to women who are at average risk for ovarian cancer. It is not for women who have genetic mutations (changes) that put them at high risk for ovarian cancer.

### What is ovarian cancer?

Ovarian cancer happens when abnormal cells grow in the ovaries. The ovaries are part of the female reproductive system that produce a woman's eggs and female hormones.

## Facts about Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer and the fifth most common cause of cancer deaths among U.S. women. Ovarian cancer is hard to detect, especially early.

Many women with ovarian cancer do not show signs or symptoms in the early stages. In addition, symptoms of ovarian cancer (which can include abdominal pain or pressure, bloating, constipation, feeling an urgent need to urinate or urinating more frequently than usual) can be signs of other health issues, not just ovarian cancer. As a result, it can be difficult to identify ovarian cancer early and it is often diagnosed at a late stage, when it is harder to treat successfully.

There are known risk factors for ovarian cancer, which include having genetic mutations, such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, that can greatly increase the risk for ovarian cancer. Hereditary syndromes such as Lynch Syndrome, which are also caused by abnormalities in genes, also greatly increase the risk of ovarian cancer. These women are considered high risk and not part of this recommendation.

No screening test has been found effective for the early detection of ovarian cancer. Two types of screening tests for ovarian cancer that are available include ultrasound and a blood test.

## Potential Benefits and Harms of Screening for Ovarian Cancer

The Task Force reviewed studies about the benefits and harms of screening for ovarian cancer. They found that current screening tests do not accurately tell if a woman has, or does not have, ovarian cancer. Therefore, screening does not prevent ovarian cancer deaths.

The Task Force also found evidence that screening women for ovarian cancer can be harmful. Screening can lead to some women getting a positive screening test result when no cancer is present. This is known as a false-positive result. These women may then undergo major surgery to remove one or both ovaries when they do not need to do so.

Because the Task Force found that screening for ovarian cancer is more harmful than beneficial, the Task Force recommends against screening.



## The Draft Recommendation on Screening for Ovarian Cancer: What Does It Mean?

Here is the Task Force's draft recommendation on screening for ovarian cancer. It is based on the quality and strength of the evidence about the potential benefits and harms of screening for this purpose. It also is based on the size of the potential benefits and harms. Task Force recommendation grades are explained in the box at the end of this fact sheet.

When the Task Force recommends against screening for a condition or disease **(Grade D)**, it is because the screening has either no benefit, or more potential harms than benefits.

Before you send comments to the Task Force, you may want to read the full [draft recommendation statement](#). The recommendation statement explains the evidence the Task Force reviewed and how it decided on the grade. An [evidence document](#) provides more detail about the scientific studies the Task Force reviewed.

The USPSTF recommends against [screening](#) for ovarian cancer in women without signs or symptoms. **(Grade D)**

### Notes

[screening](#)  
Screening is looking for a disease before a person has any signs or symptoms. In this case, screening is testing for ovarian cancer in women of average risk using ultrasound or a blood test.



## What is the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force?

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The Task Force works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services, such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medicines. The recommendations apply to people with no signs or symptoms of the disease being discussed.

To develop a recommendation statement, Task Force members consider the best available science and research on a topic. For each topic, the Task Force posts draft documents for public comment, including a [draft recommendation statement](#). All comments are reviewed and considered in developing the final recommendation statement. To learn more, visit the [Task Force Web site](#).

### USPSTF Recommendation Grades

Grade	Definition
A	Recommended.
B	Recommended.
C	Recommendation depends on the patient's situation.
D	Not recommended.
I statement	There is not enough evidence to make a recommendation.

## Click Here to Learn More about Ovarian Cancer



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(Medline Plus)



**Ovarian, Fallopian Tube, and Primary Peritoneal Cancer Screening (PDQ®)**  
(National Cancer Institute)



**Ovarian Cancer**  
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)



**Ovarian Cancer**  
(Office of Women's Health)

## [Click Here](#) to Comment on the Draft Recommendation



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between July 18 and August 14, 2017.



All comments will be considered for use in writing final recommendations.