

Ovarian Cancer

Encouraging Informed Conversations with Your Healthcare Professional



As a person living with ovarian cancer, you and your loved ones may have questions for your healthcare professionals at any point.



people in the U.S.
are diagnosed with ovarian
cancer each year.



of women diagnosed with
ovarian cancer are **63 years
of age or older.**



of patients live longer than
5 years after diagnosis when
ovarian cancer is found early.

Knowing what questions to ask and what resources to have ready before, during, and after your healthcare appointments is an important step toward taking charge of your own health.

**The below checklist and questions can help guide an informed
conversation with your healthcare professional.**



Before your appointment

- ☐ Write down questions you have for your healthcare professional. Be prepared to jot down any important information shared by your care team on a piece of paper or in your "Notes" app. We have *provided potential questions below that may be relevant to you.*
- ☐ Consider if you want a family member or close friend to come with you to the appointment for support and to take notes.
- ☐ Bring this discussion guide, extra paper and a pen to write down key points from your conversation.



During your appointment

Whether you're newly diagnosed or your treatment is ongoing, it's important to know what questions to ask in order to have an informative discussion with your care team.

Questions to consider include:

Coordination with Care Team

- What is your preferred method of contact for additional questions? Email? Phone? Patient portal? How long will it take for you or your staff to get back to me?
- Do you have an online communication portal that I can use to reach out between visits?
- How frequently should I come in for check-in visits for monitoring?

About the Diagnosis & Testing

- What are the most common symptoms that may indicate the presence of ovarian cancer?
- How is ovarian cancer typically diagnosed, and what tests are involved in the process?
- Would you recommend a biopsy or a blood test? Why?
 - How is a biopsy performed and what should I expect during and after the procedure?
 - Are there risks associated with having a biopsy?
 - If we decide to go with a biopsy, will you do biomarker testing during the procedure? Learn more about biomarkers, like *BRCA* and HRD, [family history and biomarkers here](#).
- What biomarkers should I be aware of?
- What role do biomarkers have in determining my treatment plan?

If a biopsy was already performed:

- Was biomarker testing done? If not, can we do this testing on my tumor?
- How accurate are these tests?
- Are there genetic or lifestyle factors that may have contributed to my cancer? If so, are there test(s) that can be done to learn more?
- If I am *BRCA* positive, will this affect my treatment plan?
- If I didn't undergo genetic testing when I was first diagnosed, should I have it done now?
- Is anyone in my family at risk? If so, what test(s) can they take to determine this?

If You're Considering Treatment, Undergoing Treatment or in Remission

Starting Treatment:

- Are there different types of ovarian cancer? What types do I have?
- What should I expect during treatment?
- Where will I need to go for treatment?
- How often will I need to come into the office for treatment? How will my treatment be administered?
- What side effects should I expect during my treatment(s)?
- What are my treatment options? How do they work?
- Will health insurance cover my treatments?
- Should I consider a clinical trial?
- If my stage of cancer changes, will this affect the treatment options available for me?



During your appointment (cont.)

- Are there any considerations that may affect my treatment options based on the kind of cancer I have?
- If I am *BRCA* positive/*BRCA*mut, does this affect the treatments I can take?
- How often will I be receiving treatment?
- Will I routinely have testing done? How often?

Undergoing Treatment:

- Do I have new test results since my last appointment?
- What do the results mean? What will happen next?
- Is my current treatment plan still the best option for me?
- How do I know if my treatment is working?
- Are there other treatment options I should consider?

If new treatment options are suggested:

- Why are you recommending this treatment option?
- What do I need to know about this treatment? How does it work? How is it administered?
- What side effects should I expect? How will this impact my life? What do I need to know about ongoing monitoring?
- Is this treatment covered by my health insurance?
- What happens after I finish treatment?

In Remission:

- If I'm not currently receiving treatment, does this mean I am in remission?
- What does it mean to be in remission?
- What are my chances of my cancer returning?
- Why would my ovarian cancer recur?
- What symptoms should I look out for that may signal a recurrence?
- What do I do if my cancer recurs?
- What are my options if my cancer returns?
- If my cancer does return, does this affect the treatments available for me?
- What is maintenance therapy?
- What are my options for maintenance therapy?
- How will maintenance therapy impact my daily routine and lifestyle?
- Ask about maintenance therapies, including whether one is appropriate for you, what the options are, and how they are administered.
- Are there oral therapy options available? How frequently would I have to take it?
- Do I need to know my *BRCA* status to be prescribed a maintenance therapy?
- Ask your healthcare professional about treatments that are available while you are in remission, like maintenance therapies. Questions to ask include whether one is appropriate for you, what the options are, and how they are administered.



During your appointment (cont.)

Support and Resources

- How can I best take care of myself throughout the treatment process?
- Will I need to take off work or arrange for caregiving during treatment?
- Do you have any recommendations, tips, or approaches to help me minimize or manage any anxiety I may feel during this time?
- Are there any local support groups or online resources I can look to for support and information?

Fertility and Other Questions

- What side effects and impact on my lifestyle should I expect?
- Will my diagnosis/treatment impact my sex life?
- Will my diagnosis affect my fertility (ability to have children)?
- Are there options to help save my ability to have children?
- Will my treatment make me go into menopause?
- If I am *BRCA* positive/*BRCA*mut, does this affect the treatments I can take?



After your appointment

It's normal for additional questions to arise following your healthcare visit. Remember to jot down any additional thoughts and new questions below. Don't hesitate to schedule a follow-up appointment or contact your provider to address these concerns.

Notes

About Our Way Forward



Our Way Forward is a call-to-action that encourages people living with gynecologic cancers, such as ovarian and endometrial cancer, their loved ones, and healthcare providers to rethink how they talk about these cancers. The program provides ways to learn from each other's cancer experiences and to help navigate the physical and emotional challenges that these diseases bring. For more information, visit ourwayforward.com, and follow us on Instagram ([@ourwayforward_gsk](https://www.instagram.com/ourwayforward_gsk)) and Facebook ([@OurWayForward.GSK](https://www.facebook.com/OurWayForward.GSK)).

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