

# September is



## gynecologic cancer awareness month

**The Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC)** understands the importance of bringing awareness to all gynecologic cancers—cervical, ovarian, uterine/endometrial, vaginal and vulvar cancer—and declared September as Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month (GCAM) with a goal of reaching more and more people each year.

These resources give you the tools to share knowledge about gynecologic cancer symptoms, risk factors, prevention and early detection—because every five minutes, someone will be diagnosed with one of these cancers and over 33,000 will die from a gynecologic cancer this year.

### Take action to help end gynecologic cancers

- 1 Spread awareness via social media
- 2 Add resources to your personal, organizational or institutional website
- 3 Spread awareness in your community
- 4 Print and share educational materials

#### Spread awareness via social media

Use **#GynecologicCancerAwarenessMonth**, **#GCAM** or **#IWishIKnew**

September is **#GynecologicCancerAwarenessMonth!** Visit [foundationforwomenscancer.org](http://foundationforwomenscancer.org) for information specific to gynecologic cancer symptoms and treatment, risk and prevention, clinical trials and survivor stories.

Gynecologic oncologists are medical doctors with specialized training in treating gynecologic cancers. If cervical, ovarian, uterine/endometrial cancer, vaginal or vulvar cancer is suspected or diagnosed, seek care from a gynecologic oncologist:

[bit.ly/fwc-see-specialist](http://bit.ly/fwc-see-specialist)

Follow and share the **#IWishIKnew campaign** featuring the voices of gynecologic cancer patients, survivors, family members and friends.

## Cervical cancer

#CervicalCancer symptoms include abnormal vaginal discharge or bleeding, bleeding after vaginal sex, vaginal odor and pelvic or abdominal pain. Any of these signs should be checked out by a gynecologist. [bit.ly/fwc-cervical-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-cervical-cancer)

Most cases of #CervicalCancer are now preventable. Get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine before becoming sexually active and have your children vaccinated at ages 11-12. [bit.ly/fwc-cervical-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-cervical-cancer)

The best way to find #CervicalCancer early is to have regular Pap tests and HPV tests between ages 21 and 65 at intervals recommended by your health care provider. [bit.ly/fwc-cervical-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-cervical-cancer)

## Ovarian cancer

There is currently no good screening for #OvarianCancer. See a gynecologist if you experience any of these symptoms for more than a few weeks: bloating, urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency), pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly. [bit.ly/fwc-ovarian-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-ovarian-cancer)

#OvarianCancer early detection tips: See a doctor if you have symptoms. Schedule regular check-ups, including pelvic exams. Know your family history and ask your doctor about genetic testing. [bit.ly/fwc-ovarian-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-ovarian-cancer)

Transvaginal ultrasounds and CA 125 blood tests may be offered to screen those with a high risk of #OvarianCancer due to an inherited genetic syndrome such as Lynch syndrome, BRCA gene mutations or a strong family history of breast and ovarian cancer. [youtu.be/yQOSoo1MltU](https://youtu.be/yQOSoo1MltU)

## Uterine/Endometrial cancer

#EndometrialCancer, also known as #UterineCancer, is the most common gynecologic cancer. Getting to and staying at a healthy weight is one way to lower your risk of endometrial cancer. [bit.ly/fwc-endo-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-endo-cancer)

Early detection improves the chances #EndometrialCancer will be treated successfully. See a gynecologist if you experience unusual vaginal bleeding, spotting or discharge. [bit.ly/fwc-endo-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-endo-cancer)

At menopause, all women should be told about the risks and symptoms of #EndometrialCancer, and strongly encouraged to report any vaginal bleeding, spotting or discharge to their doctor. [bit.ly/fwc-endo-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-endo-cancer)

## Vaginal cancer

Signs of #VaginalCancer include unusual vaginal bleeding, bleeding after vaginal sex, pain, problems with urination or bowel movements, a watery discharge, or a lump or mass in the vagina. If you experience any of these symptoms, see a gynecologist.

[bit.ly/fwc-vaginal-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-vaginal-cancer)

#VaginalCancer is associated with the human papillomavirus (HPV) types 16 and 18—the #HPV vaccine can be used to prevent HPV infection. Routine wellness visits and cervical cancer screenings can sometimes find early invasive vaginal cancer.

[bit.ly/fwc-vaginal-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-vaginal-cancer)

## Vulvar cancer

Signs of #VulvarCancer or pre-cancer include chronic itching, abnormal bleeding or discharge, skin color changes (lighter or darker, red or pink), bump or lump with wart-like or raw surfaces. Any symptoms should be checked out by a gynecologist.

[bit.ly/fwc-vulvar-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-vulvar-cancer)

While there is no standard screening for #VulvarCancer, knowing what to look for can help with early detection—an area on the vulva that looks different than normal, a bump or lump (red, pink or white), thickening of the skin of the vulva or an open sore.

[bit.ly/fwc-vulvar-cancer](https://bit.ly/fwc-vulvar-cancer)

## Add resources to your personal, organizational or institutional website

Incorporate this information on the websites you have access to, so others know where to go to learn more about gynecologic cancers.

**The Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC)** is dedicated to supporting research, education and public awareness of gynecologic cancers. Visit their website for information specific to gynecologic cancer symptoms and treatment, risk and prevention, clinical trials and survivor stories.

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

September is **Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month (GCAM)** and each year the FWC strives to bring even more attention to these cancers. **Learn how you can get involved.**

## Spread awareness in your community

Whether you or someone you care about has been impacted by gynecologic cancers, you're in a position to share your experience and empower others with the knowledge you've gained. Your efforts this Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month (GCAM) can have a huge impact on individual lives and the community at large.

### Get your work involved

- Print and hang posters in your office showing the signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancers.
- Select a day where everyone wears purple, the awareness color for gynecologic cancers. Take a picture and share it on your company's social media pages using #GCAM.
- Place a donation jar at your desk or in a common area and let your colleagues know you're raising money for FWC in honor of GCAM.

### Do something at school

- Print and hang GCAM posters on community bulletins boards.
- Encourage your health and wellness center to share these resources and spread awareness about the HPV vaccine (as it lowers the risk of three out of five gynecologic cancers).
- Plan a creative event where you can share gynecologic cancer resources and fundraise for FWC.

### Attend a local health fair

- Reach out to the organizers and ask if there's an opportunity for you to share FWC resources at their event.
- Find out if the nearest cancer center is promoting GCAM
- Check out your local cancer center's website to see what events they have planned during September.

If you find out about GCAM events in your area, share them! Post them on social media, email them to family and friends, or send event information to your local news outlets.

## Print and share educational materials

The following GCAM posters include key facts about cervical, uterine, ovarian, vaginal and vulvar cancer.

# 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)



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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



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# 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.

### 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.

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



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# vaginal and vulvar cancer

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## Know the key facts

**Vaginal cancer begins in the vagina, the muscular tube that connects the outer part of the female genitalia (vulva) to the uterus. Most vaginal cancers occur in the lining of the vagina.**

**The vulva includes the labia majora (outer lips), the labia minora (inner lips), the clitoris and the opening of the vagina. Vulvar cancer most often affects the inner edges of the labia majora or the labia minora.**

### Symptoms of Vaginal Cancer

- Unusual vaginal bleeding
- Bleeding after vaginal sex
- Pain
- Problems with urination or bowel movements
- Watery discharge
- Lump or mass in the vagina

### Symptoms of Vulvar Cancer

- Chronic itching
- Abnormal bleeding or discharge
- Skin color changes (lighter or darker, red or pink)
- Bump or lump with wart-like or raw surfaces
- Open sore

### What can you do to prevent or detect vaginal or vulvar cancer early?

- Get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine before becoming sexually active
- Schedule regular check-ups, including pelvic exams
- Use a mirror to examine your vulva for any changes
- See a doctor if you experience any symptoms

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



## Thanks for all you do to help end gynecologic cancers

The Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting research, education and public awareness of gynecologic cancers. FWC is the official foundation of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO), the premier medical specialty society for health care professionals trained in the comprehensive management of gynecologic cancers.

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



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#GCAM