

# Primary care

# 10 TOP TIPS

## Patient guide

This set of top tips was developed by a workshop group comprising people affected by ovarian cancer and GPs.

### Ovarian cancer: a patient perspective on going to the GP

- 1** Some symptoms are particularly significant: take note of persistent bloating, pain in the pelvis or abdomen, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly and needing to wee more urgently or often than usual; particularly if the symptoms are new for you, they don't go away and especially if they happen more than 12 times a month.
- 2** If you feel something is seriously wrong then act early. After all, you know your own body. Talking to your GP about symptoms might save your life.
- 3** If you think you need an appointment be assertive and don't be put off.
- 4** If you need more time because you have a number of concerns you can book a double appointment with your GP. Remember telephone appointments may be available if you have a specific issue you would like to discuss.
- 5** Help your GP as much as possible, in advance of your appointment write down anything you want to discuss and if there is something specific like ovarian cancer that you are worried about, mention this to your GP.
- 6** Keep a symptom diary if your symptoms persist. This can be very useful not only for you but also when you see your GP.
- 7** If friends or family notice you're unwell or experiencing symptoms, act on their concerns and make an appointment with your GP, don't dismiss their worries. If you would like to you can always bring a friend or family member to support you in your consultation.
- 8** If your GP asks you to return if things haven't improved, they really mean it.
- 9** If tests and investigations are negative and your symptoms persist, go back and see your GP. Don't be afraid of your GP – they are there to help.
- 10** A normal smear test only rules out cancer of the cervix and not other female cancers such as ovarian and uterine (womb). If you are worried about ovarian cancer then say so.

For more information on symptoms and tests, go to  
[www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptoms](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/symptoms)

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