

# OVARIAN CYSTS

## WHAT ARE OVARIAN CYSTS?

An ovarian cyst is a collection of fluid within the ovary. There are many different types of ovarian cysts. Because of the fear of ovarian cancer, cysts are a common cause of concern among women. But, it is important to know that the vast majority of ovarian cysts are not cancerous. However, some benign cysts will require treatment in that they do not disappear, and in quite rare cases, some may become cancerous. The good news is that almost all ovarian cysts will disappear spontaneously without any treatment. Since the vast majority of ovarian cysts are benign, the presence of an ovarian cyst is usually a non-worrisome occurrence.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Most of the time, ovarian cysts are harmless and cause no symptoms. **When symptoms do occur, they include:**

- ≈ A feeling of fullness or swelling of the abdomen
- ≈ Weight gain
- ≈ A dull constant ache on either or both sides of the pelvis
- ≈ Pain during intercourse
- ≈ Delayed, irregular or painful menstrual periods
- ≈ Increased facial hair
- ≈ Sharp, severe abdominal pain, fever, and/or vomiting. This may be caused by a bleeding cyst, one that breaks or twists.

## TYPES OF OVARIAN CYSTS

- **Functional cysts** - This is the most common type. These cysts are related to variations in the normal function of the ovaries. For example, they form when an egg tries to release as it should during normal ovulation. They can last for four to six weeks. Rarely do they secrete hormones.
- **Follicular and corpus luteum cysts** - A follicular cyst is one in which the egg-making follicle of the ovary enlarges and fills with fluid. A corpus luteum cyst is a yellow mass of tissue that forms from the follicle after ovulation. These types of cysts come and go each month and are associated with normal ovarian function.
- **Abnormal cysts or neoplastic cysts** - These result from cell growth and are mostly benign. In some cases, they can be cancerous. Abnormal cysts require medical treatment by your doctor. Examples include:
  - Dermoid cyst - which consists of a growth filled with various types of tissue such as fatty material, hair, teeth, bits of bone and cartilage.
  - Polycystic ovaries - caused by a buildup of multiple small cysts which cause hormonal imbalances that can result in irregular periods, body hair growth and infertility.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER...

Since ovarian cysts often cause no symptoms, it is especially important for women who have had past cysts or with a family history of ovarian tumors to have regular **pelvic examinations**. Women who have previously had ovarian cysts are at a greater risk of developing further cysts. **Endometriosis** may be worsened by the presence of ovarian cysts and your chance of oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries) increases. In the unusual case of malignant ovarian

cysts early treatment offers the best hope for recovery. Women who develop ovarian cysts after **menopause** are more likely to have malignancies.

Remember, if you experience any fullness, pressure, or discomfort in your pelvic region seeks **your physician** 's advice **immediately**. The earlier ovarian cysts are discovered and treated the better your chance for complete recovery.

## DETECTION

**You can find out if you have ovarian cysts through:**

- A pelvic exam, in which your doctor can feel the size of your ovaries and discover abnormalities.
- An ultrasound, in which sound waves create pictures of internal organs through a device placed on your abdomen or a probe inserted inside your vagina.
- A laparoscopy, a minor surgical procedure which allows your doctor to see the structures inside your abdomen
- Tumour marker blood test – this test is taken if malignancy is suspected.









## TREATMENT

Depends on:




- ✿ Size and type of cyst(s)
- ✿ Age and whether you are in your reproductive years or have reached menopause
- ✿ Desire to have children
- ✿ Overall health status
- ✿ Severity of symptoms

Some cysts may resolve without any treatment within one to two months. If a cyst does not resolve, surgery may be needed to remove the cyst. If a cyst is found early, the surgery may not have to be extensive and the cyst may be removed sparing the ovary. Sometimes the ovary needs to be removed and surgery may include removal of the fallopian tubes and the uterus as well.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

<p>Do you have severe abdominal pain, fever and vomiting?</p> <p></p>	<p> See Doctor</p>
<p>Do you have any of the following that are not due to other known reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Abdominal fullness or swelling</li> <li> Delayed, irregular or painful menstrual periods</li> <li> Pain during intercourse</li> <li> Dull and constant ache on either or both sides of your pelvis</li> </ul> <p></p>	<p> Call Doctor</p>

## SELF-CARE AND PREVENTIVE PROCEDURES

-  Have regular pelvic exams according to your doctor's recommendations.
-  Take painkillers for minor pain.
-  Reduce caffeine intake.

## REFERENCES:

### Websites:

- a) <http://www.mcare.org/healthtips/homecare/ovarianc.htm>
- b) <http://womenshealth.tqn.com/health/womenshealth/library/weekly/aa111998.htm>
- c) <http://www.mjbovo.com/OvarianCysts.htm>
- d) <http://womenshealth.tqn.com/health/womenshealth/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.healthy.net/library/books/healthyself/womens/ovariancysts.htm>
- e) <http://www.gynsecondopinion.com/OvarianCysts.shtml>
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