

# Ovarian and Prostrate Cancer

We run this article written by Dr Helen McCalvey last March when Trinity Medical was still open. It's a very important topic and as it is Ovarian Cancer awareness month, i thought it good to rerun it.

**Ovarian cancer** is the sixth most common cancer in women, and there are approximately 7500 new cases diagnosed in the UK each year.

You have a higher risk of developing ovarian cancer if you have a family history of ovarian or breast cancer, particularly where there are two or more members from the same side of the family affected.

Ovarian cancer is more common in women after menopause, but can affect younger women. There is a higher risk of ovarian in cancer in women who smoke, who have used HRT, or who are overweight.

Ovarian cancer often causes symptoms that are similar to other more common and less serious conditions, such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Symptoms can be mild in the initial stages. These factors can make it difficult to diagnose early, before the cancer has spread.

**Symptoms which could indicate ovarian cancer include:**

**Bloating or swelling in the tummy**

**Abdominal or pelvic pain**

**Increased urinary frequency**

**Feeling full, loss of appetite, nausea**

**Other symptoms including back pain, change in bowel pattern, pain during sex, weight loss, fatigue, unexpected vaginal bleeding**

If you have concerns you should arrange to see your GP, and talk about your symptoms and your concerns. Your GP should take a history from you and examine you. They may arrange for you to have a blood test and an ultrasound scan



**Prostate Cancer** is now the most common cancer affecting men in the UK, and there are just under 50,000 new cases diagnosed per year.

Sometimes prostate cancer grows too slowly to cause any problems or affect how long you live, and many men with prostate cancer will never need any treatment. Sometimes prostate cancer grows quickly and needs treatment to stop it spreading.

You are more likely to develop prostate cancer if you are aged 50 or over, your father or brother have had prostate cancer, or you are of African or Afro-Caribbean descent.

Prostate cancer may not produce any symptoms, particularly in the early stages. Symptoms can include changes in urination such as difficulty starting urinating, a weak flow, dribbling after urinating, needing to urinate more at night. More advanced symptoms can include back pain, blood in urine or semen, or weight loss.

If you are concerned you have symptoms, or want to discuss your risk of prostate cancer you should make an appointment with your GP. Your GP would take a history from you, and discuss your concerns. They might recommend a blood test for PSA (prostate specific antigen) and a rectal examination.

**Screening Tests**

There are no national screening programmes for ovarian cancer or for prostate cancer currently. Please take part in the screening for cervical, breast and bowel cancer when you are invited. We know that the uptake for these health checks are lower in SE20 than in neighbouring areas.

**Dr Helen McCalvey MBChB MRCGP Trinity Medical Centre**