

[Fallopian Tube Cancer - Diagnosis](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 07/2013

ON THIS PAGE: You will find a list of the common tests, procedures, and scans that doctors can use to find out what's wrong and identify the cause of the problem. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Doctors use many tests to diagnose cancer and find out if it has spread to another part of the body, called metastasis. Some tests may also determine which treatments may be the most effective. For most types of cancer, a biopsy is the only way to make a definitive diagnosis of cancer. If a biopsy is not possible, the doctor may suggest other tests that will help make a diagnosis. Imaging tests may be used to find out whether the cancer has spread. This list describes options for diagnosing this type of cancer, and not all tests listed will be used for every woman. Your doctor may consider these factors when choosing a diagnostic test:

- Age and medical condition
- Type of cancer suspected
- Signs and symptoms
- Previous test results

In addition to a physical examination, the following tests may be used to diagnose fallopian tube cancer:

Pelvic examination. The doctor feels the uterus, vagina, ovaries, fallopian tubes, bladder, and rectum to check for any unusual changes. A [Pap test](#) [3], often done with a pelvic exam, is used to find and diagnose cervical cancer, not fallopian tube cancer.

Ultrasound [4]. An ultrasound uses sound waves to create a picture of the internal organs. In a transvaginal ultrasound, an ultrasound wand is inserted into the vagina and aimed at the uterus

to obtain the pictures.

Blood tests/CA-125 assay. There is a blood test that measures a substance called CA-125, a [tumor marker](#) [5], which may be found in higher levels in women with fallopian tube cancer. Woman younger than 50 with conditions such as endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, and uterine fibroids may also have an increased CA-125 level. This test is more accurate in postmenopausal women.

[Computed tomography \(CT or CAT\) scan](#) [6]. A CT scan creates a three-dimensional picture of the inside of the body with an x-ray machine. A computer then combines these images into a detailed, cross-sectional view that shows any abnormalities or tumors. A CT scan can also be used to measure the tumor's size. Sometimes, a special dye called a contrast medium is given before the scan to provide better detail on the image. This dye can be injected into a patient's vein or given as a pill to swallow.

[Magnetic resonance imaging \(MRI\)](#) [7]. An MRI uses magnetic fields, not x-rays, to produce detailed images of the body. MRI can also be used to measure the tumor's size. A special dye called a contrast medium is given before the scan to create a clearer picture. This dye can be injected into a patient's vein or given as a pill to swallow.

Genetic testing. As explained in [Risk Factors](#) [8], mutations to the *BRCA1* gene may increase the risk of developing fallopian tube cancer. Genetic specialists can test your genes as part of the diagnosis of fallopian tube cancer and determine the likely course of the disease. Learn more about [genetic testing](#) [9] in another section of Cancer.Net.

After diagnostic tests are done, your doctor will review all of the results with you. If the diagnosis is cancer, these results also help the doctor describe the cancer; this is called staging.

The next section helps explain the different stages for this type of cancer. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Stages, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/fallopian-tube-cancer/diagnosis>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24638>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24714>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24730>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24486>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24578>

[8] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18841>

[9] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24895>