

## Promising Screening Method for Ovarian Cancer Found

Researchers have developed a way to screen women who don't have a high risk of ovarian cancer and who have been through menopause. There are currently no screening methods for women who don't have a high risk of ovarian cancer. Women at high risk for ovarian cancer may receive regular screening or reduce their risk of cancer in other ways, such as surgery to remove the ovaries. This new method estimates a woman's risk of ovarian cancer by using her age and the results of a yearly CA-125 blood test. CA-125 is a substance called a tumor marker that is found in higher levels in women with ovarian cancer. In this study, women who had increasing CA-125 levels received transvaginal sonography (TVS), an imaging test that uses sound waves to create a picture of the ovaries and look for any tumors, and were referred to a gynecologic oncologist to decide if surgery was needed. A gynecologic oncologist is a doctor who specializes in treating cancer in a woman's reproductive organs.

Over eight years, less than 1% of the 3,238 women in the study needed TVS. Eight women were referred to a gynecologic oncologist for surgery, and of those women, three had early-stage invasive ovarian cancer that is likely to grow and spread.

### What This Means for Patients

"More than 70% of ovarian cancers are diagnosed when they have already grown to an advanced stage. This study is one step forward in finding a reliable screening test for early-stage disease," said lead author Karen Lu, MD, Professor of Gynecologic Oncology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. "This approach could be a useful and inexpensive tool for detecting ovarian cancer in its early, more curable stages, including the types of ovarian cancer that are the most aggressive." A larger study of this screening method is underway to further determine its effectiveness. If there are similar results, this screening method may be recommended in the future for women who don't have a high risk of ovarian cancer.

### Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What is my risk of ovarian cancer?
- What are the symptoms of ovarian cancer?
- Would you recommend screening for ovarian cancer?

### For More Information

[Guide to Ovarian Cancer](#) [1]

[ASCO Answers Fact Sheet: Ovarian Cancer](#) [2]

[Understanding Tumor Markers](#) [3]

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#### Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Ovarian+Cancer>

[2] [http://www.cancer.net/sites/cancer.net/files/vignette/ASCO\\_Answers\\_Ovarian.pdf](http://www.cancer.net/sites/cancer.net/files/vignette/ASCO_Answers_Ovarian.pdf)

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Treatments%2C+Tests%2C+and+Procedures/Understanding+Tumor+Markers>