

# An introduction to ovarian cancer

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# There are three types of ovarian cancer

## Epithelial Ovarian Cancer

- **90%** of all cases
- **82%** of UK ovarian cancer cases are diagnosed in women over the age of **50**.

## Germ Cell

- **5%** of all cases
- **More common in younger women**

## Sex-cord Stromal

- **5%** of all cases
- **More common in younger women**

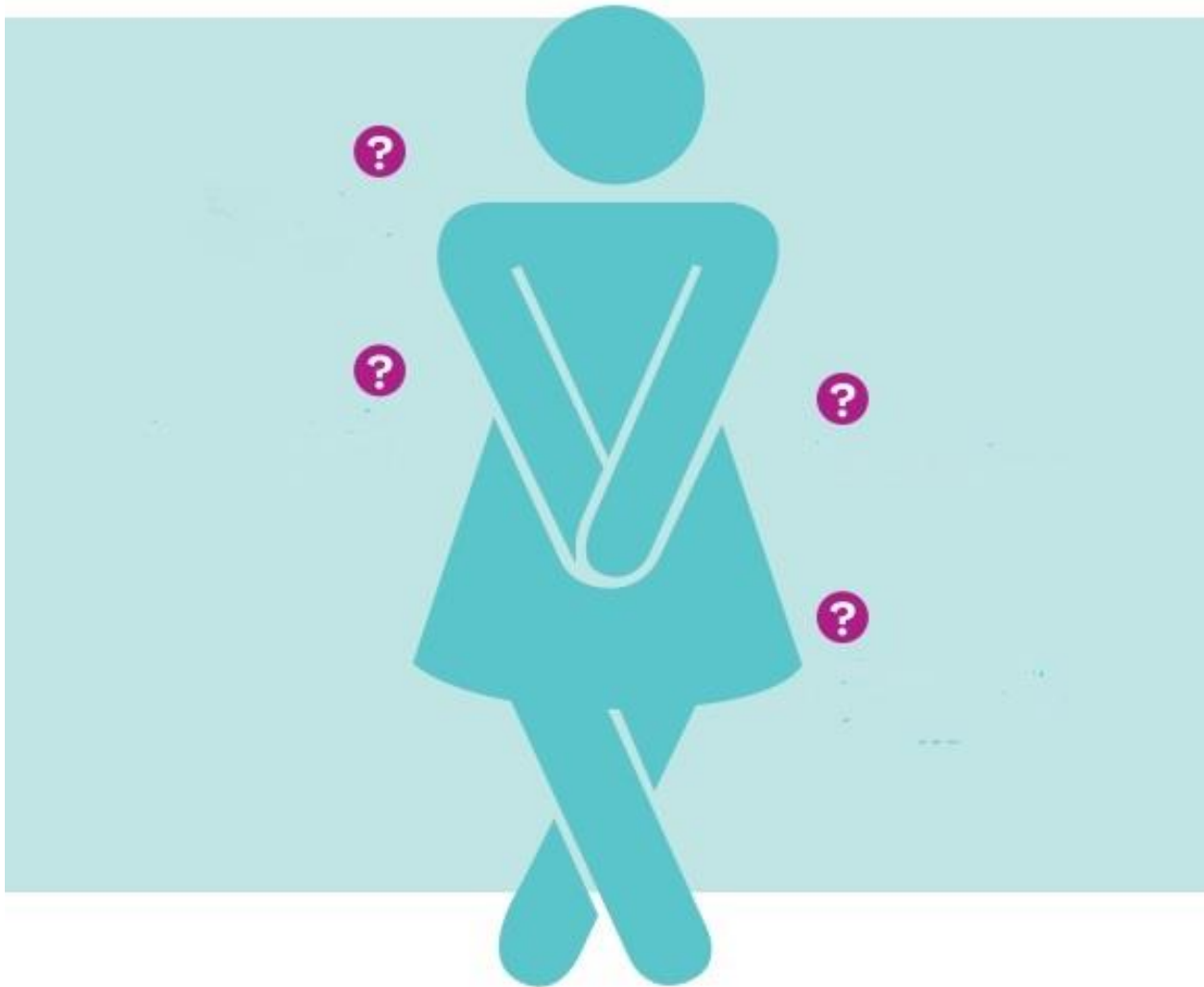
## Most common cancers in women

- **Breast** – 55,000 women diagnosed a year
- **Lung** – 23,000
- **Bowel** – 18,500
- **Womb** – 9,500
- **Skin** – 8,000
- **Ovarian** – 7,300

## Ovarian cancer facts and figures

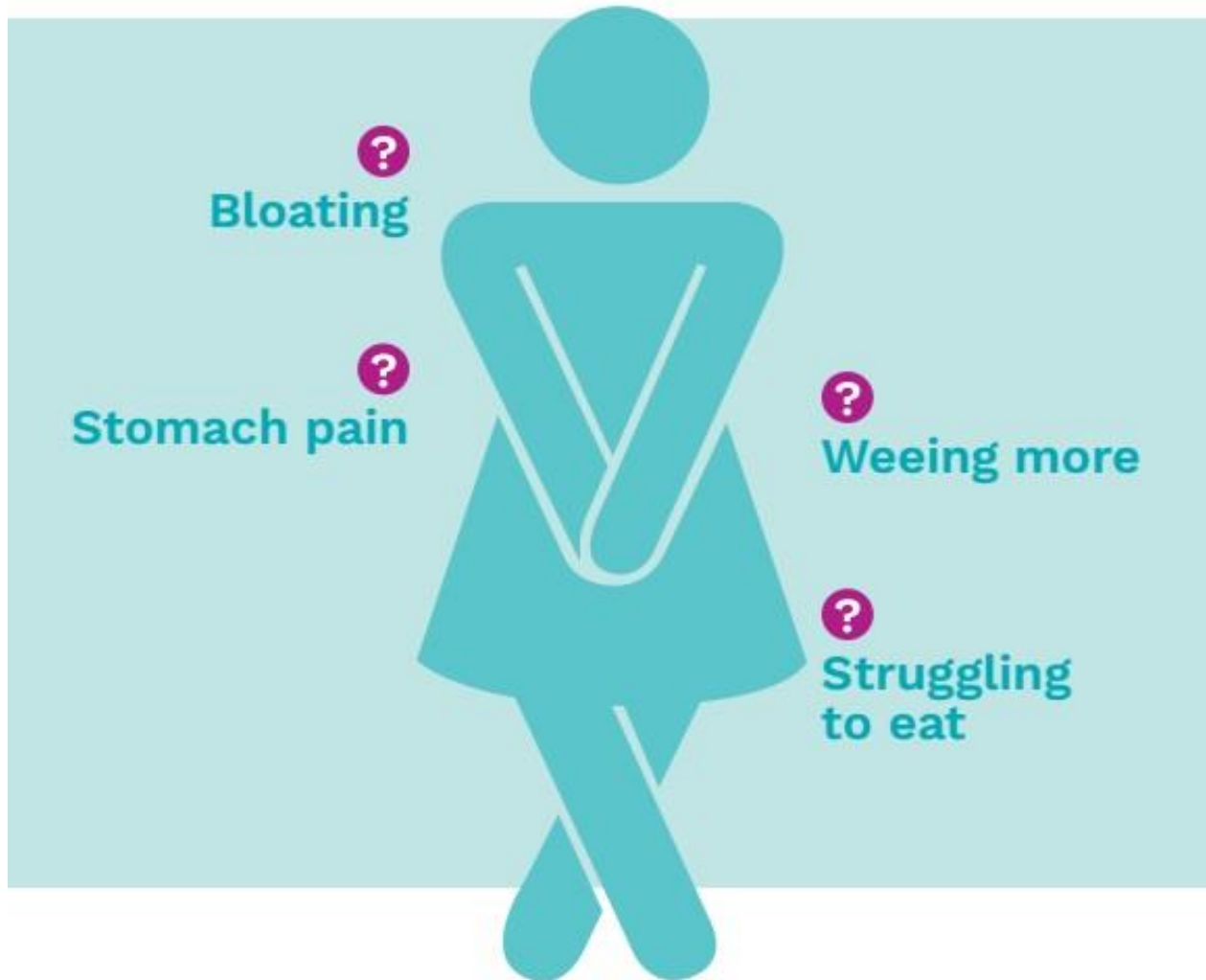
- Ovarian cancer is the **6<sup>th</sup>** most common cancer in women in the UK (7,300 new cases diagnosed each year)
- **4,200** women die from ovarian cancer each year (1 woman every 2 hours) – more women die of ovarian cancer every year than all the other gynae cancers combined
- Survival rates are low in the UK, only around **43%** of women will survive beyond five years
- Survival rates in the UK are some of the worst in Europe

# What are the symptoms of ovarian cancer?



Women with ovarian cancer deserve better. Join us. Fight with us. Act now.

## Ovarian cancer has four main symptoms



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## What do you notice about these symptoms?

- They are vague and could be symptoms of a number of other things
- If the symptoms are:
  - severe
  - persistent
  - frequent
  - out of the ordinary
  - with no obvious explanation

### **Make an appointment to see your doctor**

- Get to know your body, and act if things are normal or you can't explain your symptoms.

## How is ovarian cancer diagnosed?

- There is no screening tool for ovarian cancer. One in four women mistakenly believe that cervical smear tests detect ovarian cancer – they don't!
- If your doctor is concerned you might have ovarian cancer they will send you for a **CA125 blood test**
- CA125 is a protein found in your blood and if it is more than normal this could be a sign of ovarian cancer
- You would then be sent for a **pelvic or transvaginal ultrasound scan** to identify any unusual masses
- **Explorative surgery** might also be required



## Ovarian cancer has four stages

- **Stage 1:** the cancer is contained entirely within the ovary or ovaries
- **Stage 2:** cancer may have spread to the fallopian tubes, womb, bladder, bowel and pelvic area
- **Stage 3:** cancer could affect the abdominal cavity
- **Stage 4:** the cancer may effect organs and places a distance from the ovaries such as the lungs and brain

## What affects my risk of ovarian cancer?

- Family history and genetics
  - Know your family history
- Age
- Long menstrual history
- Not linked to lifestyle
  - But still important to be healthy

## BRCA 1/2 gene mutations

- Everyone has BRCA genes – men and women
- They help prevent cancer from developing
- If they are **mutated** they cannot perform their function and cause around 15% of ovarian cancer cases each year
- **1 in 400** people in the general population carry a BRCA gene mutation
- **1 in 40** Ashkenazi Jewish population. Also high in populations such as Polish, Icelandic, Swedish

## BRCA 1/2 gene mutations

- Women who have ovarian or breast cancer are eligible for testing
- People with strong family history of breast, ovarian and other cancers may also be eligible
- If a woman is BRCA positive there are risk reduction options:
  - Double mastectomy
  - Ovary removal
- A parent carrying a gene mutation has **50%** chance of passing it on to their children

**Ovarian cancer**  
Population: 2%

BRCA2: 10-20%  
BRCA1: 40-60%



**Breast cancer**  
Population: 11%

BRCA2: 45-60%  
BRCA1: 60-85%



## Things to remember

- **Know the four symptoms** – bloating, stomach pain, weeing more and struggling to eat
- **Know your body** – act quickly if you're concerned
- **The cervical smear does not detect ovarian cancer**
- **Think about your risk** – find out your family history of ovarian and breast cancer
- **Visit our website** – [ovarian.org.uk](https://www.ovarian.org.uk)