National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

OVARIAN CANCER is one of the deadliest cancers that affect women. In the United States in 2010, the American Cancer Society predicts there will be 21,880 new cases of ovarian cancer and 13,850 deaths.¹ When detected at its earliest stage, ovarian cancer has a greater than 93% 5-year survival.¹ Only 19% of cases are found in the earliest stages, however, because the symptoms of ovarian cancer are nonspecific and good methods of early detection are not yet available.² Around 70% of patients with ovarian cancer will have a recurrence, depending on the stage at which it was diagnosed.³

September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in the United States. To help spread awareness about ovarian cancer and share facts about risk, detection, recurrence, and treatment, events such as ovarian cancer runs and candlelight vigils will be held in towns nationwide throughout the month.

Visit our Web site to find a list of events near you.

REFERENCES

What you should know about chemotherapy drugs

WOMEN with recurrent ovarian cancer have many important treatment-related questions to consider. You may wonder when your treatment should begin, what medications you should take, and how these drugs will affect your quality of life. Or, if you have already received treatment and your cancer has returned, you may wonder how your treatment options have changed.

One of the most important factors is whether your cancer is platinum-sensitive or platinum-resistant. Platinum-sensitive cancers recur after 6 months or more of remission, are responsive to platinum-based therapy, and are often treated using more than one agent. Patients with platinum-sensitive cancers have the most treatment options available to them. Platinum-resistant cancers recur less than 6 months after initial treatment, are not responsive to platinum-based therapy, and are usually treated with a nonplatinum single agent. Women with platinum-resistant cancer are generally treated with a platinum agent.

Ways to advocate

United States of Teal
www.unitedstatesofteal.org
Encourage your state leaders to send in their pledge cards to wear teal during National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, pass out symptom cards, and more.

Teal Toes
www.tealtoes.org
Visit this Web site for a list of teal nail polish colors to wear to increase awareness about ovarian cancer.

Teal Tea
www.tealtea.com
This Web site lists events the foundation hosts, such as tea and ice cream social fundraising events.

Menopause the Musical
www.menopausethemusical.com
This humorous musical, performed at locations nationwide, donates a portion of its proceeds to local and regional ovarian cancer chapters to help raise awareness.

Teal Diva
www.tealdiva.org/?load=flash
Order ovarian cancer t-shirts; ovarian cancer awareness events are also posted.

BY THE NUMBERS

21,880
Estimated new cases of ovarian cancer in the United States for 2010

13,850
Estimated number of deaths from ovarian cancer in the United States in 2010

70%–90%
Percent of patients with ovarian cancer who will have a recurrence
For your patient

Resources about Treatment

National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, Ovarian Cancer Resource guide for women with recurrent disease
www.ovarian.org/assets/pdf/NOCC_Recurrent.pdf

The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Ovarian Cancer

Highlights from the 2009 American Society of Clinical Oncology Guide Cervical and Ovarian Cancer

Johns Hopkins Pathology, General Q&A about Recurrent Ovarian Cancer
www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu/recurrentqa.cfm

UpToDate, Patient information: Ovarian cancer treatment
www.uptodate.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~~dFuuyaQoS5ASd

Cancer Research UK, Living with advanced or recurrent ovarian cancer
www.cancerhelp.org.uk/type/ovarian-cancer/living/living-with-advanced-or-recurrent-ovarian-cancer

10 questions to ask at your next exam

Communication with your health care team is crucial to understanding your diagnosis and the treatment options available to you. The more you know and understand about your cancer, the better equipped you will be to deal with it. Writing down a list of questions you have and bringing it with you to your appointments can help improve communication between you and your health care providers. Conducting research at the library or on the Web about treatment options you’re curious about will also help increase your knowledge and guide you about what you should ask. Don’t be afraid to ask as many questions as you need to; knowing the specifics will keep you better informed, and your doctor is there to help you.

Ask these 10 questions at your next exam to start improving communication with your doctor:
1. What does this diagnosis mean for me?
2. What medications should be used, and in what order?
3. Is surgery an option?
4. What are the side effects of treatment, and how severe will they be?

Cancer are unlikely to benefit from retreatment with the same chemotherapy drugs, so these patients must be treated with another type of chemotherapy.¹

Once your doctor determines which type of recurrent ovarian cancer you have, you can work together to choose the most effective treatment. You can empower yourself by learning more about commonly-used chemotherapy and hormonal drugs. The following list of common drugs used to treat recurrent ovarian cancer details how they are administered and what side effects they may cause.

- Altretamine (Hexalen)
  www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds/a601200.html
- Capecitabine (Xeloda)
  www.xeloda.com
- Gemcitabine (Gemzar)
  www.gemzar.com/Pages/index.aspx
- Irinotecan (Camptosar)
- Liposomal doxorubicin (Doxil)
  www.doxil.com
- Paclitaxel (Taxol)

For the complete list of drugs, please visit our Web site.

REFERENCE
1. www.ovarian.org/assets/pdf/NOCC_Recurrent.pdf

MORE RESOURCES ONLINE

Nutrition during cancer treatment
Key considerations for selecting a treatment
Finding a gynecologic oncologist
5. How will treatment help me? Do the potential benefits outweigh the risks?
6. Are there clinical trials open to me?
7. What signs should I look for that might indicate the ovarian cancer has come back?
8. How will this treatment affect my quality of life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?
9. If I’m worried about the cost of treatment, who can help me with these concerns?
10. Is there anything else I should be asking?

For more tips on communicating with your health care professional:
• www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu/coping.cfm?CategoryID=12
• www.cancercare.org/pdf/fact_sheets/fs_doctor_talk_en.pdf
• www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Ovarian+Cancer?sectionTitle=Questions_to_Ask_the_Doctor

Is a clinical trial right for me?

CLINICAL TRIALS are research studies that involve people and test new ways to prevent, detect, diagnose, or treat cancer and other diseases. These trials often recruit patients who have tried several methods of cancer treatment already, making a clinical trial a promising option for those with recurrent ovarian cancer. Before deciding to participate in a clinical trial, you should consider a number of important factors. Use the following checklist as a guide to the steps you should take in deciding whether or not a clinical trial will fit your individual criteria and goals for treatment.

1. Understand clinical trials
   First, familiarize yourself with what a clinical trial is, why it is important, and how it might help you. To learn more, you can
   • Ask your doctor if he/she knows of any trials, and discuss whether a trial is right for your type of recurrent ovarian cancer
   • Read the The National Cancer Institute (NCI) booklet Taking Part in Cancer Treatment Research Studies, available online at www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/Taking-Part-in-Cancer-Treatment-Research-Studies

2. Complete the Cancer Details checklist
   If you decide to look for a clinical trial, you must know the details about your cancer diagnosis. Each clinical trial has very particular eligibility criteria. To help you determine which trials you might be able to participate in, fill out the NCI Cancer Details Checklist, available at http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/finding/treatment-trial-guide/page15, with as much detail as possible. Keep the list beside you as you search for trials.

3. Narrow your search criteria
   After you have fully completed the Cancer Details checklist, use it to

Ovarian cancer support resources

American Society of Clinical Oncology
Provides information about ovarian cancer, coping, survivorship, advocacy and policy, publications, multimedia, and more

CancerCare
Offers a telephone counseling service through a partnership with the L’Oreal Paris and Ovarian Cancer Research fund, support groups, connect education workshops, financial assistance resources, links to fact sheets about ovarian cancer, and more

CONVERSATIONS!
806-355-2565, www.ovarian-news.org
Raises awareness and understanding of ovarian cancer, advocates for increased research and funding for more effective diagnostics and treatment, and provides tips for coping

EyesOnThePrize.org
www.eyesontheprize.org
Provides information and emotional support from the survivor’s perspective to women with gynecologic cancers, their families and friends, and health care providers

Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE)
866-824-7475, www.facingourrisk.org
Provides support to women who are at high risk for getting breast and ovarian cancers due to their family history and genetic status

Gemzar
www.gemzar.com/pages/pat400_ovarian_cancer.aspx
Provides information on ovarian cancer, diagnosis and staging, side effects, frequently asked questions, and facts about Gemzar and other treatment options

More resources available on our Web site.
Details Checklist, you should consult resources that list current, or open, clinical trials. Narrow your search results by specifying that you have recurrent ovarian cancer to find trials that are appropriate for you. Resources that can help you locate trials are listed to the left.

4. **Review the trial details** Once you identify trials you may be interested in, carefully consider the following details of the trial:
   - **Trial objective** Determine the main purpose of the trial and make sure it aligns with your goals for treatment.
   - **Eligibility and location** Make sure you meet all the requirements for the trial, and decide where and how often you are willing to travel.
   - **Study length** Ask how long the trial will run, and determine if it seems reasonable to you.

5. **Ask questions** Call the clinical trial team and ask questions that will help you determine if this particular trial is right for you. You may want to ask for the potential risks and benefits or for a copy of the informed consent document, for example. For a detailed list of further questions you should ask, visit www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/treatment-trial-guide/page12.

6. **Discuss your options with your doctor** Last, discuss any questions or concerns about the treatment with your doctor. Also ask about the risks and benefits of standard treatment for recurrent ovarian cancer. Once you have considered all these factors, make an informed decision about whether or not a clinical trial is right for you.

### Goals for treating recurrent ovarian cancer

- **Be realistic about the cumulative toxicities of your treatments.** Certain treatments may work effectively for 2 to 3 months but have toxicities 6 months down the line.
- **Prolong survival and delay progression.** Talk with your doctor to find a balance between fighting disease-related side effects and minimizing effects caused by your treatment.
- **Maintain the highest possible quality of life.** All treatment will have some side effects. Make choices that will allow you the best quality of life, and consider the long-term impact of the choices you make now.
- **Treat your cancer like a chronic disease.** Think of your cancer as a long-term disease that may go into a remission but will never go away completely. Anticipate impending decision points to better prepare you for when they do arrive.
- **Participate in the decision-making process.** Actively educating yourself about your treatment options and discussing them with your health care provider will help you maintain the hope and positive thinking necessary to cope with chronic disease.
- **Deal with your emotions.** Many women experience feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, fear, and sadness following a recurrence. Talk about your emotions with your family, friends, health care team, or therapist.
Gemzar
http://www.gemzar.com/pages/pat400_ovarian_cancer.aspx
Provides information on ovarian cancer, diagnosis and staging, side effects, frequently asked questions, and facts about Gemzar and other treatment options.

Gilda Radner Familial Ovarian Cancer Registry
1-800-682-7426, www.ovariancancer.com
Collects data on the link between heredity and ovarian cancer. The organization also offers general counseling, support groups and assistance with genetic screening.

Gynecologic Cancer Foundation / Women’s Cancer Network
1-800-444-4441, www.thegcf.org; www.wcn.org
Works to ensure public awareness of gynecologic cancer prevention, early diagnosis and proper treatment as well as to support research and training.

HealthCentral
www.healthcentral.com/
Provides an extensive variety of articles on ovarian cancer topics such as symptoms, treatment information, and advice from a gynecologist.

Healthline.com
www.healthline.com/channel/ovarian-cancer.html
Contains information on side effect management, how to decide on a treatment, drugs, alternative therapy, and suggested reading.

Lifescript.com
www.lifescript.com/
Contains ovarian cancer health news and extensive information about ovarian cancer.

MayoClinic.com
www.mayoclinic.com/health/ovarian-cancer/DS00293
Resources about preparing for appointments, tests and diagnosis, treatments and drugs, lifestyle and home remedies, and coping and support.

National Cancer Institute information for patients (PDQ)
www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/treatment/ovarianepithelial/patient/
Also http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/ovarian
Extensive facts about treatment options by stage of disease, chance of recovery, and more.

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
www.canceradvocacy.org/resources/
Features a Cancer Survival Toolbox, a free audio program that helps patients develop skills to manage their cancers, links to facts about health insurance, and more.

National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
1-888-682-7426, www.ovarian.org
Raises awareness about ovarian cancer and promotes education about the disease. Committed to improving the survival rate and quality of life for women with ovarian cancer.

OncoLink.org
www.oncolink.org/types/article.cfm?c=6&s=19&ss=766&id=8589
Provides information on making treatment decisions, news, and tips on nutrition, sexuality and fertility, and exercise, as well as an gallery of art created by patients.

Ovar’ Coming Together
www.ovarian-cancer.org/
Offers a newsletter, event listings, news, links to Web sites that offer comprehensive packets of information, and more.

OvarianCancerAwareness.org
www.ovariancancerawareness.org/home.aspx
Personal stories, ovarian cancer information, news and events, video clips.

Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
Works on a coordinated national effort to make ovarian cancer education, policy and research priorities of national policy makers and health care leaders.

Ovarian Cancer Research Fund, Inc.
www.ocrf.org
News and events, support such as links to songs on iTunes, survivor stories, tributes, and research and grants information.

People Living with Cancer (PLWC)
www.peoplelivingwithcancer.org
Information about survivorship, finding an oncologist, cancer news and meetings, publications and resources, and multimedia.

SHARE: Self Help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer
1-866-891-2392, www.sharecancersupport.org
Services include national hotlines to find local support and resources, New York City area survivor-led support groups, wellness programs, educational forums and advocacy activities.

WebMD
www.webmd.com/ovarian-cancer/default.htm
Services include articles on specific ovarian cancer topics, treatment and care, ovarian cancer glossary, Q&A, and additional resources.