

# OVARIAN TUMOR, BENIGN

(Ovarian Growth)



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

• The ovaries are the female reproductive organs that hold and release eggs and make the female hormones. An abnormal structure in the ovary that is solid is called a tumor. (An ovarian cyst is a structure that contains fluid.) However, in the ovary, some tumors may have fluid areas within them and are called cystic tumors. Benign or noncancerous tumors do not invade neighboring tissue the way malignant tumors do. A benign tumor on the ovary is usually small, but in some cases, may grow large enough to make a woman appear pregnant and cause symptoms.

• Often, the largest ovarian tumors turn out to be benign. In some cases, the tumor may have features that suggest it will behave as a cancer, but over a long period of time (10 to 20 years). These are called low malignant-potential (LMP) ovarian tumors or borderline ovarian tumors.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

May not cause symptoms. If symptoms occur, they may include:

- Mild pelvic pain.
- Pain in the lower back.
- Discomfort with sexual intercourse.
- Abnormal menstruation, including changes in menstrual flow, length of periods and intervals between periods.
- Excessive hair growth, deep voice and weight gain (sometimes).
- If a large ovarian tumor twists or ruptures, the following will occur in the lower abdomen—severe pain, rigid muscles, swelling.

### CAUSES

- Usually unknown, but it is probably related to abnormalities of female hormone production and secretion.
- Endometriosis.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

Unknown.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

No specific preventive measures. Use of oral contraceptives may decrease risk.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

Most ovarian tumors require no treatment and disappear spontaneously within 2 months. In other cases, treatment usually provides a complete cure.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Emergency abdominal surgery caused by twisting, rupture or bleeding of the ovary.



## TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

• Diagnostic tests include laboratory blood studies and pelvic examination. Usually, ultrasound studies with and without blood flow measurements to the involved ovary are used for diagnosis and to help determine the best therapy. Laparoscopy (a telescopic instrument with fiber optic light is used to examine the abdominal cavity) in some cases, and rarely, a CT scan or MRI may be recommended.

• Treatment may not be necessary, except to have regular pelvic examinations, so that the tumor's growth can be monitored.

• Some tumors require surgery to diagnose accurately, rule out malignancy, or for treatment purposes. If one ovary must be removed, normal conception and childbirth is possible as long as a normal ovary remains on the other side.

• For more information, perform a web search. A good site to start with is [www.4women.gov](http://www.4women.gov).

### MEDICATION

Female hormones may be prescribed. These help shrink or destroy some tumors. Oral contraceptives are often used as the first step in treatment.

### ACTIVITY

No restrictions unless surgery is necessary.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

• You or a family member has symptoms of an ovarian tumor, especially severe pain, rigidity and abdominal distention.

• New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.