**Ovarian Cancer**

Symptoms of Ovarian Cancer often mimic those that are linked to more common and less serious conditions. This can attribute to the difficulty surrounding early diagnosis.

Some of these symptoms (listed below) that occur regularly (especially more than 12 times a month) can include:

* persistent abdominal bloating / abdominal distension
* loss of appetite / difficulty eating / feeling full quickly after eating
* pelvic / abdominal pain
* urinary frequency / urgency
* altered bowel pattern (constipation / diarrhoea)

According to **Cancer Research UK**:

* ovarian cancer is the 6th most common female cancer; 6th most common cause of cancer death
* **7500** new ovarian cancer cases are diagnosed annually (2016-2018)
* there are approximately **4100** ovarian cancer deaths annually (2017-2019)
* the risk of ovarian cancer increases with age

In **Northern Ireland**:

* statistics indicate that **206** women were diagnosed and **128** deaths noted per year (NICR: 2016-2020)
* stage at diagnosis is one of the most important factors in ovarian cancer survival; with 5yr survival decreasing as stage increases
* 5yr survival ranged from **89.9%** for stage 1 disease to **14.1%** for stage 4 disease (2011-2015)

There is evidence that many women with ovarian cancer can experience persistent symptoms that are common to the disease, for months before diagnosis.  However, because women may not be not aware of these symptoms, and they do not want to bother their GP, the disease is usually at an advanced stage when diagnosed.

Any woman who experiences **new or persistent symptoms** is urged to visit their GP promptly. Whilst it is unlikely to be ovarian cancer, the advice is that you should not ignore persistent pelvic / abdominal symptoms.

The following websites may be helpful:

* [www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk)
* [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)
* [www.ovacome.org.uk](http://www.ovacome.org.uk)
* [www.eveappeal.org.uk](http://www.eveappeal.org.uk)
* [www.ovarian.org.uk](http://www.ovarian.org.uk)