



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

For information contact: Shawna Rhine, Community Outreach Coordinator/Public Information Officer
Southern 7 Health Department & Head Start

Office: 618-626-2355 Cell: 618-614-9223 Southern 7 Central Office: 618-634-2297 Email: srhine@s7hd.org

(9/18/24) September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (Southern 7 Encourages Women to be Proactive in Early Detection)

September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Southern 7 Health Department is encouraging women to be proactive in early detection, to know the symptoms, and have current knowledge of available treatments.

Because there are no simple and reliable screening tests to detect ovarian cancer (OVC) like there is for cervical cancer, OVC causes more deaths each year than any other gynecologic cancer and can occur in women at any age. In 2021, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 847 cases of ovarian cancer. In Illinois, in 2022, 473 people died from the disease.

While these numbers may appear low when compared with other forms of cancer, such as colorectal or lung cancer, per the CDC, Illinois is ranked as having the nation's 6th highest number of both ovarian cancer deaths and new cases. As opposed to cervical cancer that has the Pap test ovarian cancer has no screening test and, in Illinois, claims 70% more lives annually than cervical cancer. A Pap test and pelvic exam does not detect it. The two tests used to screen for ovarian cancer are transvaginal ultrasound and the CA-125 blood test.

Often OVC has no symptoms in early stages and often goes undetected until late stages of the disease. Symptoms can include bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, urinary urgency or frequency, and difficulty eating or feeling full quickly. If these symptoms persist for more than two weeks, consult your physician.

Higher risk factors for ovarian cancer include family history of the disease, colorectal or breast cancers, women who have never had children, and increased age. If you think you are at a higher risk based on your family history, Genetic Cancer Testing is available through Southern 7 Health Department for you and your family to help determine your risk and begin early detection.

For more information on ovarian cancer follow Southern 7 Health Department on Facebook and Instagram, visit www.hopelightproject.com, download the Southern 7 App, or call Southern 7 Health Department at 618-634-2297 ext. 971161. To learn more about Genetic Cancer Testing and to schedule an appointment contact Southern 7 Health Department.

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