

## Where can I get more information?

**NEW ZEALAND  
GYNAECOLOGICAL CANCER FOUNDATION**  
General enquires please call 0800 OVARIAN  
(0800 682 7426)  
e-mail [info@nzgcf.org.nz](mailto:info@nzgcf.org.nz)  
[nzgcf.org.nz](http://nzgcf.org.nz)

**CANCER SOCIETY NEW ZEALAND**  
Cancer Information Helpline  
0800 CANCER (226 237)  
[cancernz.org.nz](http://cancernz.org.nz)

**CERVICAL CANCER**  
National Cervical Screening Programme  
General enquires please call 0800 729 729  
[timetoscreen.nz](http://timetoscreen.nz)  
[southernncross.co.nz](http://southernncross.co.nz)  
[cancerinfo.co.nz](http://cancerinfo.co.nz)

**ENDOMETRIAL/UTERINE CANCER**  
[drtan.co.nz](http://drtan.co.nz)  
[healthnavigator.org.nz](http://healthnavigator.org.nz)  
[dermnetnz.org](http://dermnetnz.org)

**OVARIAN CANCER**  
[cancerinfo.co.nz](http://cancerinfo.co.nz)  
[drtan.co.nz](http://drtan.co.nz)  
[familydoctor.co.nz](http://familydoctor.co.nz)

**VAGINAL CANCER**  
[drtan.co.nz](http://drtan.co.nz)

**VULVAL CANCER**  
[dermnetnz.org](http://dermnetnz.org)

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[nzgcf.org.nz](http://nzgcf.org.nz)

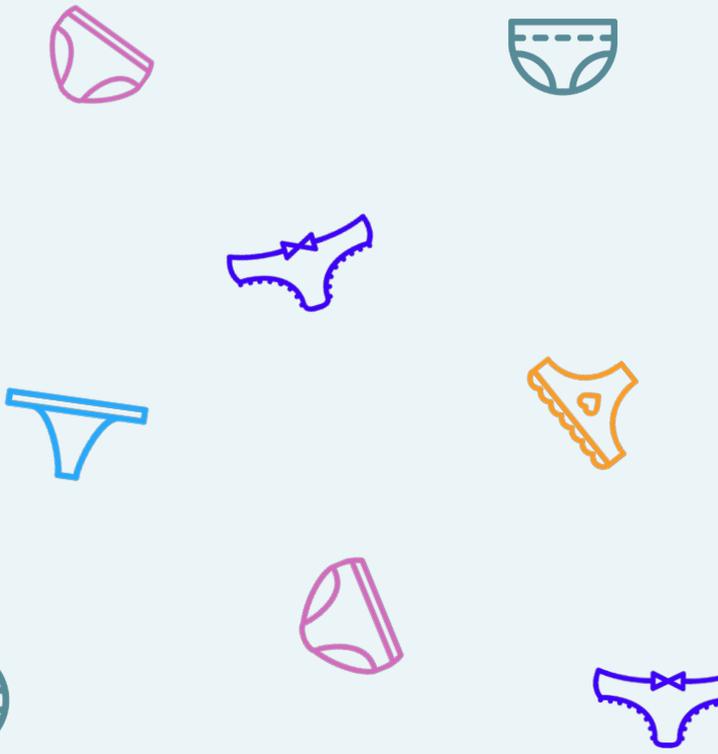


New Zealand  
Gynaecological Cancer  
Foundation®

## Women's Gynaecological Health



Let's talk about it



## LEARN LISTEN ACT

*the early signs of  
the 5 women's cancers*

*to your body - you know  
what is normal for you*

*see your  
doctor early*



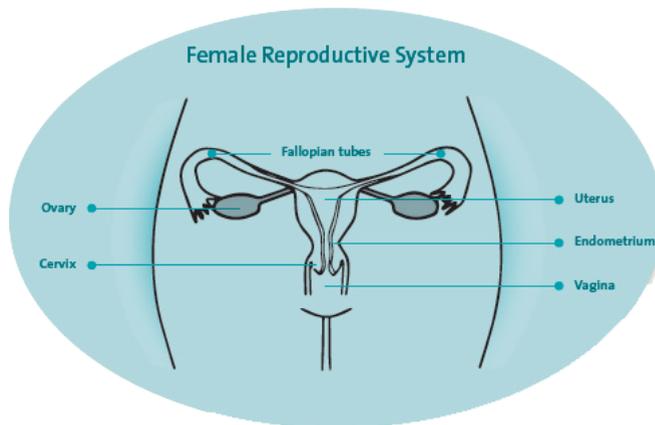
# Gynaecological Cancers

This leaflet has been prepared to help you understand more about gynaecological cancer. It provides some general information about the main types of gynaecological cancer, abnormal signs and symptoms to look out for and some ways to reduce your risk of developing these cancers.

## What are the 5 gynaecological cancers?

Gynaecological cancers are cancers that start in any part of a woman's reproductive organs. The five main gynaecological cancers are:

- Cervical
- Endometrial (sometimes referred to as Uterine)
- Ovarian
- Vaginal
- Vulval



For more information please consult a health care professional

## Gynae impacts everyone in New Zealand

Gynaecological cancers take the lives of more than 350 New Zealand women each year. Ovarian cancer causes around 190 of these deaths. As with most cancers, the risk of developing gynaecological cancer increases with age.

## What causes gynaecological cancer?

The causes of gynaecological cancer are not yet fully understood, particularly in relation to ovarian and endometrial cancers. However, what is known is that women who have not had children and/or who are overweight may have an increased risk of developing these cancers.

Some cervical, vulval and vaginal cancers are caused by a virus called human papilloma virus (HPV). This is a common sexually transmitted virus and most women are infected with it at some point in their lives. For most women, HPV will not cause any serious health problems, however, for a few women it causes cell changes that if left untreated can lead to cancer.

## What screening tests are there for gynaecological cancers?

Smear tests (also called Pap tests) detect early cell changes that if left untreated may become cervical cancer. Having regular smear tests therefore helps to prevent cervical cancer from developing by allowing early treatment of the abnormal cells before they become cancer. This is the only screening test available and it is only for cervical cancer.

It is often assumed that smear tests will also protect against the other cancers such as ovarian and endometrial cancer. However, this is not the case. Regular smear tests will not detect ovarian, endometrial, vulval or vaginal cancer. Unfortunately, there are currently no screening tests for these other gynaecological cancers.

Being aware of the signs and symptoms, noticing when something is abnormal or 'not quite right', and seeking medical advice promptly is very important.

## Steps to help reduce the risk of developing gynaecological cancer



### 1. Vaccination and reducing exposure to HPV virus

Practice safe sex to reduce the risk of exposure to HPV. Vaccination before becoming sexually active prevents the risk of vulval, vaginal and cervical cancers.



### 2. Quit smoking

Smoking increases the risk of developing gynaecological cancer and cervical cancer. Stopping now may start to reduce your risk and will help to improve your general health. For more information visit [quit.org.nz](http://quit.org.nz)



### 3. A healthy diet and regular physical activity

Being overweight can increase the risk of developing some gynaecological cancers (endometrium and ovarian).



### 4. Keeping up to date with your cervical smear tests

Having regular cervical smear tests (every three years or more frequently if advised by your doctor), from the age of 20, will help prevent cervical cancer from developing.