

**Statement from the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC)
on
Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month 2026: Know the Signs**



Every September, communities across Canada come together to raise awareness about ovarian cancer, a disease that remains one of the most challenging to detect early, yet one where knowledge can save lives. Ovarian cancer is often called a "silent" disease because its early symptoms are subtle and easily mistaken for common, less serious conditions. Unlike some cancers with reliable screening tools, there is no routine test for ovarian cancer available to women, which makes public awareness one of the most powerful tools available for catching the disease sooner, when treatment tends to be more effective.

The statistics illustrate why awareness matters so much. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, an estimated 3,000 women in Canada will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2026, and roughly 1,950 will die from the disease

this year. Survival has historically fallen behind other reproductive cancers: the five-year net survival rate for ovarian cancer in Canada currently sits at 44 percent, meaning fewer than half of women diagnosed will survive at least five years. Ovarian cancer ranks as the ninth most commonly diagnosed cancer among Canadian women, yet it remains the most lethal gynecological cancer, largely because it is so often diagnosed at a late stage. This is one of the key reasons early symptom recognition matters so much (Canadian Cancer Society, <https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/ovarian>). For more information on symptoms and detection, click: <https://ovariancanada.org/symptoms-detection>

While any woman can develop the disease, certain factors increase risk, including a family history of ovarian or breast cancer, inherited genetic mutations such as BRCA1 or BRCA2, increasing age, since most cases occur after menopause, and endometriosis. Talking openly with family members about cancer history can help everyone better understand their own risk profile. Ovarian cancer awareness is not only for those directly affected. It matters to partners, friends, daughters, and communities who can help someone notice symptoms sooner or offer support through diagnosis and treatment.

This September, wearing teal is a start, but sharing knowledge is what truly changes outcomes, removes barriers and stigma around women's health care. The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) advocates for the wellbeing of all women through our policies and practices.

If you or someone you know is experiencing persistent symptoms, please consult a healthcare provider for proper evaluation.

Respectfully,

Michelle Abel

VP Children and Youth/Global Affairs



Mission Statement: To empower all women to work together towards improving the quality of life for women, families, and society through a forum of member organizations and individuals.