

Ovarian Cancer Prevention – 2008 Is Not Too Late

Pittsburg, PA – WomenEtcetera! a new online community for women over 50 began the year with a clear mission. “The interests and concerns of mature, modern women are our main focus,” explains Suzanne Caplan, founder and CEO of www.WomenEtcetera.com. “With ovarian cancer being such a primary – although little discussed danger – we are partnering with a high level professional group to work on this issue. If ovarian cancer is diagnosed in time the cure rate is high, and that is our goal.” Vivian Heard, spokesperson for The Ovarian Cancer Institute, said “There is never a more pertinent time to spread awareness about ovarian cancer than the present. Perhaps the good news about ovarian cancer is that if it’s detected early, it has a 90% cure rate. The bad news is that over 70% of women aren’t diagnosed until an advanced stage. One in 55 women in the United States will be diagnosed this year and more than 15,000 will die from the disease. Mortality rates from ovarian cancer are the highest among all gynecologic cancers. With ovarian cancer becoming an increasingly serious issue, it is heartening to see that the medical industry is keeping pace. Benedict B. Benigno, M.D., is a world-renowned surgeon and gynecologic oncologist, specializing in ovarian cancer. He has treated women from ages 16 to 60-plus and has made it his priority to discover an early detection tool for ovarian cancer. Besides being Founder and Executive Director of Southeastern Gynecologic Oncology at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, he is also founder and CEO of the Ovarian Cancer Institute (OCI), housed at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. Together with John McDonald, PhD, Chief Research Scientist at OCI, and their team of scientists, their ongoing behind-the-scenes work aims to change the face of ovarian cancer once and for all. In the meantime, women of all ages can take the following actions in protecting themselves and better understanding their personal risks when it comes to ovarian cancer. All women are strongly advised to:

- i. Know their bodies well and pay attention to any changes, no matter how subtle – including abdominal weight gain and bloating, abdominal pain, difficulty eating or swallowing, indigestion, frequent or urgent urination and unusual post-menopausal bleeding.
- ii. Understand that many cancers do not discriminate when it comes to age – including ovarian cancer. You can never be too old, or too young to be diagnosed with ovarian cancer.
- iii. Be aware of their family history, to better ascertain if they are at a greater risk from ovarian or breast cancer. For example; Jewish women of Ashkenazi decent, those who started their periods at a young age, and women who have a history of breast cancer are in a higher risk category than other women. “Genetic screening might be in order for higher risk women, as approximately 10% of ovarian cancer is caused by a mutation in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes,” explains Dr. Benigno, concluding that “Any female who takes a proactive step in getting screened could very well be taking a lifesaving measure.”

About the Author

www.WomenEtcetera.com provides information on finances, health, careers as well as fun for the active women over fifty who wish to be a part of a like-minded community of their peers. This website is also a blog-site offering a variety of voices on the challenges, as well as the absurdities, of life. Suzanne Caplan recommends that “We learn to laugh at ourselves as well as the others who underestimate us. We are still a generation to be reckoned with and we know how to make a difference.”

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