



Ovarian Cancer Awareness Campaign – Wessex Cancer Alliance

Intro

March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness month and this year, Wessex Cancer Alliance will be working closely with Primary Care teams, to help raise awareness and share messaging with their patients, to improve the understanding about the various signs and symptoms to look out for.

With thanks to Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance, who have supported us by sharing their visual assets for this campaign.

Please use this toolkit on your websites, Newsletters and social media channels, to help raise awareness of Ovarian Cancer, throughout March 2024.

Key messages:

The main symptoms of ovarian cancer are:

- persistent bloating or a swollen tummy
- reduced appetite or feeling full quickly after eating
- pain or tenderness in your tummy or pelvis (the area between the hips)
- urinary symptoms (needing to wee more urgently or more often).

These will be:

- frequent – they will usually happen more than 12 times per month
- persistent – they don't go away
- new – they're not normal for you.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms; please speak to your GP. 9 times out of 10, it will not be cancer, but it is better to know as treatment is more successful, the earlier cancer is diagnosed.

Facts/Figures:

**Statistics Sources: [Cancer Data](#) (which includes information from the National Disease Registration Service) and [Cancer Research UK](#)*

Across Wessex, approximately 350 women are diagnosed with Ovarian cancer each year (Cancer Data 2020)

There are around 7,500 new ovarian cancer cases in the UK every year, that's 21 every day (2016-2018 CRUK).

Incidence rates for ovarian cancer in the UK are highest in females aged 75 to 79 (CRUK 2016-2018).

In females in the UK, ovarian cancer is the 6th most common cancer.

In 2020, approximately 63% of ovarian cancer cases, were diagnosed at a late stage in Wessex.



Ovarian Cancer symptoms include:

- persistent bloating or a swollen tummy
- reduced appetite or feeling full quickly after eating
- pain or tenderness in your tummy or pelvis (the area between the hips)
- urinary symptoms (needing to wee more urgently or more often).

Target Audience:

Primary Care – GP's and the Supportive Cancer workforce (Social prescribers, Cancer Coordinators, Admin/reception staff)

Women aged 60 – 80 years, are most at risk of Ovarian Cancer.

Assets:

Visuals – with thanks to Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance for sharing their visual assets for this campaign. Please download images for social media and website, to use as part of this campaign [here](#)

Webinar – Join us on 21/02/2024 for a dedicated webinar about Ovarian Cancer, aimed at primary care colleagues. A copy of the recording will be available here:

<https://wessexcanceralliance.nhs.uk/lunch-and-learn-webinars/>

Posters: please print the posters provided on the [Primary Care Toolkit](#) and share these in your waiting rooms/areas

Leaflets: Several Charity websites, offer free ordering for materials and leaflets, please find a list of charities that support ovarian cancer patients on our [dedicated Cancer Matters Wessex webpage](#)

Methods of communication:

Websites, Newsletters, Bulletins, Intranet

Suggested copy for your websites, newsletters, intranet and/or Bulletins:

Long copy:

March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness month and we are supporting Wessex Cancer Alliance to help raise awareness and encourage women to know the signs of ovarian cancer and contact their GP if they are concerned. We want more women to be diagnosed at an earlier stage, when treatment and outcomes are more likely to be successful.

Around **350** women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer in Wessex Cancer Alliance every year.

In 2020, **63 per cent of cases were diagnosed at a late stage**. Women can be diagnosed with ovarian cancer at any age but it's more common in women aged between 75 and 79.

The main symptoms of ovarian cancer are:

- persistent bloating or a swollen tummy
- reduced appetite or feeling full quickly after eating
- pain or tenderness in your tummy or pelvis (the area between the hips)



- urinary symptoms (needing to wee more urgently or more often).

These will be:

- frequent – they will usually happen more than 12 times per month
- persistent – they don't go away
- new – they're not normal for you.

There are many other (non-cancer) causes for these symptoms but if you are concerned, it's best to get them checked out.

Please contact your GP if you have been experiencing any of these symptoms for three weeks or more. 9 times out of 10, it will not be cancer, but catching it early will make it easier to treat.

Find out more about Ovarian Cancer and details of organisations that offer support, on this dedicated website, Cancer Matters Wessex: [Ovarian Cancer - Cancer Matters Wessex](#)

Short copy:

March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness month and we are supporting Wessex Cancer Alliance to help raise awareness and encourage women to know the signs of ovarian cancer and contact their GP if they are concerned. We want more women to be diagnosed at an earlier stage, when treatment and outcomes are more likely to be successful. Find out more about the signs, symptoms of Ovarian Cancer and organisations that can support you, on the dedicated website; Cancer Matters Wessex www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer

Social media

Suggested posts for your social media accounts (primary care , ICBS, CMW)

March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month – make sure you know the signs and symptoms and when to speak to your GP: www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer

Finding Ovarian cancer early can mean it is more treatable. Please do not ignore the symptoms- If you are concerned, please speak to your GP. www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer

Ovarian Cancer is the 7th most common cancer in women in the UK. Make sure you know the signs to look out for and when to speak to your GP www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer

Want to know more about ovarian cancer and where to get support? Find everything you need, here. www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer

Ovarian Cancer is the 6th most common cancer in women in the UK. Women aged 60-80 are most at risk, so it is important to know the signs and symptoms to look out for www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer

March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness month. You know your normal, so if something has changed or doesn't seem right, please speak to your GP. It might be nothing but if it is cancer, it is best to catch it early. For more details about signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer, please visit www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer



Ovarian cancer signs and symptoms can be easy to ignore or mistake for something else. If you have had any of these symptoms for three weeks or more, please contact your GP. Catching cancer early, saves lives. [Add image of the symptoms, available to download from [primary care toolkit](#) or see below for links]

[Further information/Signposting](#)

Please signpost people to Cancer Matters Wessex, where they will find links to websites and organisations for support and advice about Ovarian Cancer.

www.cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/ovarian-cancer

Images/Assets can all be downloaded from the primary care toolkit [link to be inserted] or below:

[Image 1](#)

[Image 2](#)

[Image 3](#)

[Image 4](#)

[Image 5](#)

[GP Screen](#) Image

Poster – please print and share in public places.

[Patient Story/Case Study](#)

Em's Ovarian Cancer Story

Em was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer in 2023. She first noticed that when lying on her stomach, it felt uncomfortable and when lying down one morning she felt a large lump in her tummy and knew this was not normal for her. Em called her GP and they sent her for tests, including a CT scan. The tests revealed 'a large suspicious looking, ovarian mass'. When Em met with the Gynaecology Consultant, they discussed her treatment options. Em agreed to have a full hysterectomy and the surgery went ahead in May 2023. Apart from feeling increasingly bloated Em felt no other symptoms and continued to work as normal until her surgery. Following tests post operation, Em was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer.

After 12 weeks recovery, Em began Chemotherapy to ensure all the cancer was gone. She had 4 cycles of chemo and again, she managed to keep working during this time. Em chose to wear a cold cap to help prevent hair loss during her treatment, and also took part in a trial which meant she wore 'cold boots' and 'cold gloves' during her Chemo, to reduce the side effects of neuropathy (damage caused to nerves in the tips of fingers and toes).

After her fourth chemotherapy session, Em had a scan to confirm she was now cancer-free; the treatment had worked. For the next 5 years, Em will go for regular checks, to make sure she remains cancer free...these start off as three monthly, and then move to six monthly and then yearly.



Em wants to encourage other women to seek advice if they are worried. She says; “you know what is normal for you and if you have any concerns at all, then go and get it checked.”

This year, for Ovarian Cancer Awareness month, Em will be walking 100k in March, to raise money for Ovarian Cancer Action – a charity she found out about through her love of football and another woman’s experience of Ovarian cancer. Em is keen to get back to fitness and normal life and put her cancer journey behind her.



Image: Em after her final Chemo session.