

Fact Sheet

GYNAECOLOGICAL CANCER

Queensland^{1,2}

- * Gynaecological cancer refers to all cancers of the female reproductive tract (cancers of the cervix, ovaries, uterus, vagina and vulva).
- * 862 Queensland women were diagnosed with gynaecological cancer in 2008 (the most recent figures available).
- * 287 Queensland women died from gynaecological cancer in 2008.
- * Compared to the general population, 69.1 per cent of females diagnosed with gynaecological cancer will survive for at least five years (ranges from 45.8 per cent for ovarian cancer to 82.5 per cent for uterine cancer).
- * Uterine cancer is the most commonly occurring gynaecological cancer.
- * Ovarian cancer is the leading cause of death from a gynaecological cancer.
- * Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable of all cancers.
- * Vaginal cancer is one of the rarest cancers in the human body.

Gynaecological cancer in Queensland, 2008

Site	Incidence	Deaths
Uterus	405	60
Ovary	216	145
Cervix	150	50
Vulva	48	14
Other female genital organs	43	18
Total	862	287

Detection and symptoms

- * If the cancer is found and treated early, there is an increased chance of surviving the disease.
- * There are a number of changes women should look out for. The changes may be due to many causes other than cancer but should always be brought to the attention of a doctor.
- * Women should consult their general practitioner about the following:
 - Irregular vaginal bleeding;
 - Changes to the skin of the vulva such as redness, ulceration or irritation and itching;
 - Discomfort or bleeding during or after intercourse; and
 - Pelvic pain, swollen legs or backache.

¹ Queensland Cancer Registry 2011, *Cancer in Queensland, Incidence, Mortality, Survival and Prevalence 1982-2008*. Brisbane: Cancer Council Queensland, Queensland Health and QCR.

² Queensland Cancer Statistics On-Line, 2011. Viertel Centre for Research in Cancer Control, Cancer Council Queensland (www.cancerqld.org.au/research/qcsol). Based on data released by the Queensland Cancer Registry (1982-2008; released November 2011).

Fact Sheet

Vaccine for cervical cancer

- ✦ Medical researchers have developed a vaccine to protect against cervical cancer caused by five types of the human papilloma virus (HPV).
- ✦ The vaccine, Gardasil, has been administered as part of Queensland Health's school-based vaccination program, which began in April 2007. The vaccine was provided to female students with parental consent in Years 10, 11 and 12 and to girls in Years 8, 9 and 10 in the 2008 school year. Gardasil is now available on the PBS.
- ✦ The vaccine was developed at the University of Queensland by Professor Ian Frazer and his research team and has demonstrated 100 per cent protection against one of the strains of human papilloma virus associated with the development of cervical cancer.
- ✦ Cancer Council Queensland has provided almost \$2 million to Professor Frazer and his team since 1988 for research into the vaccine possibilities for prevention of the cancer.
- ✦ The best defence against cervical cancer is still a Pap smear test, as it picks up abnormal changes in the cervix that lead to cancer.

Disclaimer: The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for advice from a properly qualified medical professional who can advise you about your own individual medical needs. It is not intended to constitute medical advice and is provided for general information purposes only. Information on cancer, including the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer, is constantly being updated and revised by medical professionals and the research community.

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