



Dr Alison Wint

**Feeling bloated
most days for
3 weeks?
Tell your doctor.**

**BE CLEAR
ON CANCER**

Feeling bloated most days for 3 weeks? Tell your doctor.

Let's be clear about ovarian cancer

There are over 5,900 new cases of ovarian cancer in England each year. It causes more than 3,500 deaths in England annually, but this needn't be the case. Knowing what to look out for saves lives. Most cases of ovarian cancer occur after the menopause.

If you have two or more close relatives, on either your father's or your mother's side, who developed ovarian cancer or breast cancer, you may be at higher risk of developing the condition.

Let's be clear about how to spot it

Your doctor will want to see you if you have had bloating on most days, for 3 weeks or more.

Other possible symptoms of ovarian cancer may include:

- Feeling full quickly or loss of appetite
- Pelvic or stomach pain
- Needing to pee urgently or more frequently than normal
- Changes in bowel habit
- Extreme fatigue (feeling very tired)
- Unexplained weight loss.

Let's be clear about how important it is to see your doctor

If you notice any of these symptoms, tell your doctor.

- You're not wasting anyone's time by getting it checked out.
- If it's not serious, your mind will be put at rest.
- The chances are it's nothing to worry about, but it could be a sign of something that needs treatment.

Detecting cancer early makes it more treatable, so seeing your doctor quickly may save your life. If you know anyone who has any of these symptoms, insist they see their doctor.

You can find your doctor's contact details online at [nhs.uk/persistentbloating](https://www.nhs.uk/persistentbloating)

Let's be clear about how seeing your doctor early could save your life

Here are some real life stories.

Lou Pescod, aged 65, Supporter of Ovarian Cancer Action says:

Bloating was the main symptom for me, but I put it down to getting older. I pointed it out to my sister and she urged me to see a GP. My doctor examined me and referred me to a local hospital where I had surgery to remove a lump. After further tests, the lump was confirmed as cancer of the right ovary. I had three months of chemotherapy and my treatment was over by 2009. My advice to anyone with persistent bloating is to take yourself straight to the doctor. Don't put it down to your age as it could be a symptom of something more serious.

Laurain Chapman, aged 63, Supporter of Ovacome says:

In March 2006, after an energetic holiday, I began to feel extremely uncomfortable with a bloated stomach. My trousers had become tight and I felt like I was pregnant. I'd also lost my appetite. My doctor referred me to the hospital where I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer - with a tumour on each of my ovaries. I had an operation and six months of chemotherapy. Six years on, I still lead an active life. I work part-time and enjoy walking and playing golf.

Sarah Greene, TV Presenter and Ambassador for Target Ovarian Cancer says:

“My mum had ovarian cancer so I know the importance of getting symptoms checked out early. Persistent bloating is not normal - and identifying the cause is the first step to receiving the right treatment.”

Let's be clear about how to reduce your chances of getting ovarian cancer

Stop smoking

It's never too late to stop smoking. No matter what age you stop, it reduces your chances of developing ovarian cancer and makes a real difference to your health in general.

There's plenty of support and help available from the NHS. Visit **smokefree.nhs.uk** or call **0800 169 0169**.

Look after yourself

If you are overweight you can lose weight by combining regular exercise and a calorie-controlled diet.

Stay active

Swimming, cycling, dancing - the more you can do, the better. Even walking to your local shops instead of taking the bus can make a difference.

Eat healthily

Try to get your 5-a-day. So eat more vegetables, fruit, fish and wholegrain foods. Eat less fatty foods like cakes and pastries and fewer processed meats like bacon and ham.

Unclear on anything?

Then visit **[nhs.uk/persistentbloating](https://www.nhs.uk/persistentbloating)**

This leaflet can also be made available on request in other formats by emailing: **enquiries@phe.gov.uk**

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