

HEALTH MATTERS

For Your Health



BY DR. GERALD F. JOSEPH JR.
Many women have ovarian cysts—fluid- or tissue-filled growths that form on the ovary. Ovarian cysts are usually non-cancerous and most remain small in size, cause mild symptoms if any at all, or simply go away on their own. However, they can become a problem and require treatment if they grow too large or cause pain.

Ovarian cysts can develop in women of all ages, but because most cysts occur as a side effect of ovulation, reproductive-age women are especially susceptible. Each month, an egg matures in a woman's ovary within a sac called a follicle. When the mature egg is released from the follicle, ovulation occurs. Functional cysts develop when the follicle does not open to release the egg or when the follicle seals off after the egg is released. They often go away in six to eight weeks.

Some ovarian cysts are not related to ovulation. Dermoid cysts are made from cells that can develop into different types of tissue such as hair, skin, and teeth. Endometriomas form when the cells that usually line the uterus migrate to the ovaries and continue to bleed with each

menstrual cycle. Cystadenomas develop from the cells on the outside of the ovary and are filled with fluid.

Cysts do not cause symptoms in most women, but some women experience a dull or sharp ache during certain activities. Pain may also occur if large cysts cause the ovaries to twist. Additionally, if a cyst bleeds or bursts, prompt medical attention may be needed.

In rare instances, ovarian cysts may be cancerous. As with noncancerous cysts, the symptoms of ovarian cancer may be vague or nonexistent. Some women with ovarian cancer have reported symptoms such as unexplained bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, back pain, increased abdominal size, difficulty eating, unexplained weight loss, urinary incontinence, frequent urination, constipation, fatigue, and indigestion. Tell your doctor if you have been experiencing any of these symptoms on a regular basis.

Ovarian cysts are often discovered during routine pelvic exams. If your doctor observes an enlarged ovary, further tests—such as a vaginal ultra-

Understand Ovarian Cysts

sound, blood test, or laparoscopy which uses a lighted scope to view the inside of the pelvic cavity—may be ordered to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment options for ovarian cysts vary depending on the type and size of cyst, severity of symptoms, family history, age, and other factors. Your doctor may decide to monitor the cyst for changes or increasing size with regular ultrasound exams. Birth control pills stop ovulation which can be helpful in preventing new functional cysts. Surgery to remove a cyst or the entire ovary is also available, though it may not be the best option for women who still want to have children. Your doctor can review your options based on your specific case.

Dr. Gerald F. Joseph Jr. is president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.



Do I need a counselor?

We all have life stressors, especially in today's complex world. Balancing your home, work, and spiritual life can be overwhelming.

Internal coping skills can get us through a crisis or change; however, we may not have the resources to overcome in the most effective way.

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~by Appointment Only~

Public Service Message by the Portland Observer

A Monthly Childbirth Preparation Workshop



Held at: ICTC – every third Saturday
August 21st, September 18th, 2010
October 16th, November 20th, December 18th
2823 N. Rosa Parks Way
Portland, OR 97217
503-460-9324

Time: 10:00AM – 2:00PM

Information Learned:

Hour 1
Introduction
Healthy Pregnancy

Hour 2
Nutrition
Prenatal Movement

Hour 3
Signs of Labor
Labor Management
Pain Relief
Delivery

Hour 4
Breastfeeding
Postpartum
Newborn Care
Closing

If you're able to, please bring two pillows and your support person.
Light refreshments are served

ALL ARE WELCOME

Registration is required

For more information call 503-460-9324

Flu Pandemic is Over

The World Health Organization has declared the swine flu pandemic officially over.

WHO Director-General Margaret Chan said the organization's emergency committee of top flu experts advised her that the pandemic had "largely run its course" and the world is no longer in phase six — the highest influenza alert level.

"I fully agree with the committee's advice," Chan told reporters last week.

The virus has now entered the

"post-pandemic" phase, meaning disease activity around the world has returned to levels usually seen for seasonal influenza, she said.

But Chan cautioned against complacency, saying that even though hospitalizations and deaths have dropped sharply, countries should still keep a watchful eye for unusual patterns of infection and mutations that might render existing vaccines and antiviral drugs ineffective.

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