



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Women: Be Aware*

*National Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month — September 2008*

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*[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Ladies, this month's for you. September has been designated *National Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month* in order to draw attention to the five types of cancer that are unique to women — cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar. Every year, over 73,000 women are diagnosed with a cancer affecting their reproductive organs, and more than 27,000 die of the disease.

Dr. Mona Saraiya is a medical officer with CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss gynecologic cancers. Welcome to the show, Mona.

[Dr. Saraiya] Thank you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Mona, what cancers of the reproductive tract are most common?

[Dr. Saraiya] The five most common gynecological cancers are cancers of the ovary, uterus, cervix, vagina, and vulva.

[Dr. Gaynes] Which of these cancers causes the most deaths?

[Dr. Saraiya] Ovarian cancer causes the most deaths, with approximately 13,000 deaths a year.

[Dr. Gaynes] Mona, what symptoms should women be aware of that might indicate the onset of one of the cancers of the reproductive system?

[Dr. Saraiya] Well Bob, for each of these cancers, the signs and symptoms vary. For example, for ovarian cancer, some of the most commonly associated symptoms that women should be aware of, especially if they persist for two weeks or longer or they get worse during a two-week period, are pelvic or abdominal pain, urinary symptoms like feeling the need to go more often, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, or bloating in the abdominal or stomach area. For the other gynecological cancers, I urge the listeners to go the website, [www.cdc.gov/cancer](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer), for more details for each of the signs and symptoms. And this is also part of our inside knowledge campaign, is that women should pay attention to what is normal for them, and if they notice any unexplained signs or symptoms, that they should see a doctor right away.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are there any screening tests available for all these types of gynecologic cancers?

[Dr. Saraiya] Well, one of the gynecological cancers — cervical cancer — does have a screening test, the pap test, that can find this cancer early when treatment can be most effective. For the other gynecological cancers, there is no simple or reliable way to test for the other gynecological cancers in women who do not have signs or symptoms. And that's why, again, it's important for women to know about these cancers, know what the warning signs are regarding these cancers, and learn what they can do to reduce their risk.

[Dr. Gaynes] Mona, again, can you tell listeners where they can get more information about gynecologic cancers?

[Dr. Saraiya] Sure. Listeners can go to [www.cdc.gov/cancer](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer) or they can call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

[Dr. Gaynes] Mona, thanks again for sharing this information with our listeners today.

[Dr. Saraiya] Thank you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, that's it for this week's show. Be sure and join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.*